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CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE
UNIVERSALITY AND UNIFORMITY

OF THE
THEOCRACY.

BY A LAYMAN
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

There shall be one Fold and one Shephêrd.

JESUS CHRIST.

Is God the God of the Jews, and not the God of the Gentiles?

Yea, of the Gentiles also.

ST. PAUL.

LONDON:

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1796.

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OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.
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There shall be one fold and one shepherd.

John 10:11.

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PREFACE.

THE author of the following Treatise is fully apprised of the boldness of the undertaking in which he has engaged, and of his own insufficiency to accomplish it; but he trusts it will happen to him in this as it has in other instances, that his suggestions will prove hints to men of superior talents, greater learning, and more leisure (for few have so many and various avocations) and that through their influence, mankind will be induced to entertain that extensive philanthropy which he has endeavoured to shew, it is the will of our Creator should pervade all his intelligent creatures; and which, next to their instruction, in adoring

their Creator, appears to be the great end of all his divine communications to the children of men, and which it will continue to be our duty to exercise in all the future stages of our existence, when we become incorporated with the angelic corps. For although, as we have no consciousness of any antecedent existence, we must allow this earth to be the first stage of our progress; yet, as we are assured, we were originally destined for immortality, our future change of state will not alter our condition, nor abrogate the present rule of our conduct: for our rule will be the same in heaven as it is on earth, the highest cherubim and the lowest rational animal having but one common legislator, and one code of laws, which is the Creator's will; and the happiness of all creatures must consist in knowing and performing it; for angels are happier than men, only because they know and per-

form his will better. Man, therefore, though now in the lowest class of intelligences, is in his progress to the highest state of created perfection; he is a member of the great society of spirits, partakes of their nature, and unites with them in their common duties to the Creator; for it may be said of all men at all times, what St. Chrysostom says of Christians in their oratories, that “they are in the place of angels, the place of archangels, the palace of God, in company with cherubim and seraphim, and all the powers of heaven; for though his inclosure of flesh prevents him seeing his angelic companions, man is not excluded their society, for they are about his bed, and about his path, and spy out all his ways, for it is being in the body that makes him of this world, and by putting off the body he enters into another, the world of spirits.”

In both situations he is still the same being, still a member of the same great society, still a subject of the same supreme governor, and still bound by the same law, the will of his Creator. Persuaded, therefore, of our immortal duration, and raising our thoughts to that blessed society, into which we shall be admitted, and with which proceed in our endless progress towards perfection; how great ought to be our anxiety to discover, and when we have discovered, to cultivate all those dispositions, and to acquire those habits in this our mortal state, which will be suitable to our future exalted condition, and qualify us for celestial society? Those dispositions and those habits can be only such as it is the duty of the whole intellectual world, in obedience to the divine will, to cultivate and practise towards their Creator and one another, viz. the paying universal adoration to him, and en-

tertaining and practising universal good
 will towards our fellow-creatures. To
 inculcate these great truths is the sole
 design of the following Treatise; and
 if, in order to induce men to think of
 all mankind as their brethren, the crea-
 tures of one common Creator, bound
 by the same obligations, and employed
 in the service of the same master; the
 author has treated such prejudices
 and opinions, (however sanctioned by
 antiquity, or supported by system) as
 have a tendency to divide and irritate
 men against each other, with greater
 freedom than is generally used in the
 discussion of such subjects; he begs it
 may be considered, that however sacred
 such subjects may be, the institutions of
 man's invention respecting them, derive
 no sanctity from their holiness, and he
 trusts it will be found, that they are the
 inventions of men only which he has
 attempted to expose.

The present edition of this Treatise will consist of a very small number of copies; as the author flatters himself with being enabled to render a future one more complete, from the variety of corrections and improvements which this publication will, he hopes, produce; and, to give the freer scope to animadversion, he has judged it proper, for the present, to conceal his name.

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WHEN the oppugners of divine Revelation, to supersede the necessity of supernatural illumination, represent man as sufficiently endowed by nature for all the purposes of his existence; they not only confer on him all the intellectual powers of a rational being, but they furnish him with such materials for the exercise of them, as can only be obtained by painful experience or deep reflection. Nor is it uncommon to find those who assert the necessity of supernatural assistance to enable man to perform his duty, allowing him to derive from nature such attainments as are evidently the effects of judicious instruction. But, when the natural state of man is to be considered, he ought to be taken at his first entrance into the world; and as neither principles nor ideas are innate, we must consider

him as equally ignorant, whether we allow him to have been produced in a state of infancy or as a full grown biped. For, however extensive his capacity, yet as he must be utterly unacquainted with the qualities of the objects upon which his eyes opened ; they could not enable him to distinguish what was sharp and hurtful to the touch, from what was smooth and pleasant ; what was wholesome and agreeable to the taste, from what was baneful and nauseous ; nay, he could not discern what was solid and would support him, from what was fluid and pervious. Prompted by the cravings of appetite to search for food, he might have devoured poison ; and in his wandering in search of shelter, he might have plunged into water beyond his depth.

As he is naturally an imitative animal, if he had the good fortune to be produced among quadrupeds, and took the swine for his guide in his search for food, as his more enlightened descendants are still fain to do in circumstances somewhat similar ; he would escape being poisoned, and perhaps quench his thirst without being drowned ; and, if he made acquaintance with the sheep or the bear, the comfortable feeling their wool excited, would induce him to crawl among them when they lay down to rest ; and he also found a disposition to sleep upon the approach

of night : he might likewise learn to complain of wants by bleating like a sheep, and to express his sense of gratification by chattering like the monkey. But, when he compared his own incapacity to discover his proper food, with the infallible instinct of other animals, and the miserable nakedness of his body, with the comfortable cloathing with which they were provided, he must necessarily conceive himself to be a much inferior creature to them, and think himself happy to be admitted of their society.

The return of light, and the appearance of the sun, would cheer him, as it did his companions, and under its influence he would crawl forth with them in search of sustenance; and, although he might perceive a constant succession of heat and light to accompany the sun's appearance, it would be impossible for him to conceive otherwise of it, than of a succession of small, hot, and bright things rising out of the ground on one side of the garden, and falling into it on the other.

If such, therefore, had been man's condition, at his first creation, as a complete and full grown biped, and his Creator had thus left him to himself, there is no probability he would have ever equalled the learned pig in science, or that his ratioci-

nations would have extended to the concatenations of a well taught spaniel ; and, as he could have no conception of a deity, no sentiment of religion could spring up in his mind. What ideas, therefore, must those men form of the goodness of the Creator, who can suppose him to have thus abandoned the favorite work of his hands, to perish almost as soon as he brought him into being ? And what must they conceive of the wisdom of him, whom they suppose to have endowed a creature with intellectual powers, to know and perform the will of his Creator, and left him without the means of discovering his existence, or the relation in which he stood towards him ? To deny, therefore, either the fact of supernatural instruction to the first man upon his creation, or the necessity of it, is in the one case to charge the Creator with malevolence, and in the other to impute to him folly and extravagance. Let us then leave self-sufficient men to make their blasphemous option, while we compare the history Moses has compiled of the dealings of the Creator towards the great progenitor of man, with his wants in the situation in which he must have found himself when he first became conscious of existence *.

* None but the first man, and the first of all animals, could possibly be in a state of nature ; as whatever creature comes into the world in an infantine state must of necessity receive instruc-

We are told that God created Adam in a garden replenished with herbs and fruits, in a climate so benign, that the natives at this day, when the earth is supposed to have receded from its original parallelism, require no garments to protect them from the chilness of the night; that immediately after his creation he was informed, by a celestial messenger, what fruits were proper for his food; that he was taught to give names to all the animals which surrounded him, expressive of their natures and properties, and was informed that they were all of inferior orders to himself, and made subservient to him. Here we have a short but rational account of the goodness and wisdom of the Creator, in attending to the wants of his creatures; and, we may deduce from hence that language and its use were among the first attainments of Adam; and, that his heavenly instructor employed the means the best adapted to his condition for the purpose. As the pronouncing of words could

tion of some sort from others; and, however imperfect such instruction may be, or whether it is given by oral precept or example, it is fully sufficient to supersede the natural state of the receiver or follower, to whom it is, to all intents and purposes, a revelation; for, whatever we do not discover of ourselves, but are indebted for to others, I conceive to be a revelation with respect to us, whether we receive it through a celestial or a human agent. As a state of nature is therefore impossible, a religion of nature is an absurdity.

be of no use without annexing ideas to them, sensible objects were presented to him, and names given to them, which he was taught to pronounce and to know them by; the very method which every good nurse takes to teach her infants to speak, and to know the objects of their senses; and was equally necessary to be used with Adam as with them. Though, as all his faculties were in perfection, he more readily received the impression the objects made upon his senses, more quickly annexed ideas to their sound, sight, touch, taste, or odour, and was more adroit at imitating the pronunciation of the words by which he was taught to express them. That Adam had made a considerable proficiency in the language which had been thus taught him before Eve was formed, and that he had been fully instructed in the manner of her formation, and in the purpose of the Creator in bringing her into being, appears from the names he gave her: the one signifying her relation to himself, and the other her future condition of universal mother of the human species*.

* That Adam should be taught a primary language by a celestial instructor, is not more extraordinary, than that the apostles should be enabled to speak in tongues they never learned, or perhaps heard of; but, as they were already possessed of the ideas which they were to communicate, the knowledge of apt words to express them by, was all that was wanting to give them utterance. Whereas, Adam was to be

What further instructions were given to Adam, except the command to abstain from the fruit of a particular tree, we are not told. What we do know is, however, sufficient to vindicate the goodness and wisdom of the Creator from the blasphemous imputations, which arise out of the self-sufficient plan ; for we see the bodily wants and mental capacity of this rational animal supplied and improved.

The nature and meaning of the command which followed, have given occasion to a great variety of idle allegories and absurd suppositions ; whereas, the plain and obvious sense of the words is perfectly consistent with all the subsequent injunctions of the Creator, and (which I shall shew in the course of this work) as peculiarly adapted as all others are, to the circumstances of those to whom they were delivered.

taught ideas as well as words to express them by ; and, that he was so taught the text plainly intimates ; for, when the animals were brought for him to give them names, his celestial guide must have either taught him the names, or instructed him in their several qualities, from which he might deduce their names as the Hebrew appellations of most animals are expressive of their qualities. The texts, therefore, which are so often quoted to shew that speech and language are natural to man, and that Adam was immediately, on his creation, in full possession of both, are, in truth, proofs, that he was taught both by a celestial instructor.

Without staying to enquire which of the prohibitions of the Decalogue, a single naked pair, the absolute proprietors of the world, could possibly transgress; it will be sufficient to observe, that as man is a compound being, made up of a material body, and an immaterial spirit, it was fitting that whatever injunction was given him as a test of his obedience, should inculcate the restraint of his appetite, and the submission of his will to the will of his Creator. The prohibition, therefore, from one particular fruit, which solicited their appetite by its beauty and fragrance, while they were indulged in the unrestrained consumption of every other, directly applied a temptation to the whole man. The sensual appetite was immediately excited by the agreeable ideas taken in by the sight and smell, while the reasoning soul was called upon to decide between the gratification of the sensual appetite, and the obedience to the will of the Creator. That the sensual appetite overcame in the contest, the history informs us, and of its consequences in the mortality of mankind, we have daily proofs. What more than temporal death was the penalty incurred by this transgression, has been the subject of much controversy among Christians: and it would be foreign to my present purpose to engage on either side, any further than to observe, that from the very fact of Adam's transgressing

the divine command, an inclination to do evil may as well be charged upon his original disposition, as the proneness to disobedience in his posterity may be imputed to his first transgression. His actual fall from a state of innocence is incontrovertible evidence, that he was capable of offending; and, if he had nothing in his nature that incited to disobedience, how could he have made the fatal choice? For that his will was in the crime, we must suppose, or we shall impute injustice to his judge*.

* The manner in which Adam's transgression operates upon his posterity, can only be known to those who are acquainted with the secret of man's generation. If the soul of every child that is brought into the world, is the immediate infusion of the Creator, and the body or animal substance only, is derived from the parents, how can the transgression of the parent be transmitted to the whole child, or how can the newly created soul be charged with a crime, which was committed before it was in being? The advocates, therefore, for the transmission of Adam's offence to all his posterity, must suppose, that the whole man is generated by his parents; and this opinion seems countenanced by St. Paul, when he says, that "Levy paid tythes to Melchizedek, in the loins of his great, great, grandfather Abraham." Indeed, there seems to me no greater difficulty, in supposing a spiritual being to generate a spiritual being, than that he should generate a material one; for matter cannot generate matter; and, therefore, whatever generates, must be something more than matter. After all our researches and minute investigations, we are still unable to discover how generation is performed among animals. We know not whether the embryo is deposited by the male, and only receives its

The injunction itself, and the penalty annexed to the disobedience of it, is a demonstration of man's free agency; for there is nothing of which we can be so fully assured by our senses, as we

nourishment from the female, or is composed of contributions from both. The oviparous class indeed, seems to shew, that the vital principle or soul, with whatever incloses it, comes from the male; as although a hen will lay eggs without any connexion with the male, those eggs will produce no chickens. The chicken, therefore, does not owe its existence and life to the plastic hand of nature, or to incubation, or any other unmeaning term which conceited philosophers use to conceal their ignorance, and impose upon the vulgar for science; but to something which is deposited by the male, and contained within the egg when it is laid. If then the souls of fowls are engendered by the males, (and that they have souls which think and reason, any one may convince himself who will observe the different effects the different voices of the hen has upon the chickens within hearing); I see no difficulty in supposing the vital principle of men, or the human souls, to be in like manner engendered: and surely it is more reasonable to suppose the soul grows with the body, and acquires powers by degrees, than that (as the Platonist suppose) it is struck out of the Deity, as a Birmingham coiner does halfpence out of a sheet of copper, and that it comes perfect into the foetus, but is then so imprisoned as to be incapable of action or thought, and must acquire all its notices and powers through the inlets of the body, as if it had brought nothing into the world of its own. But, whether we call the manner in which the human, and all other species of animals are propagated, creation or generation, we must come to the same conclusion, viz. that all are continued in the manner the Creator has appointed:

may be convinced by our reason that God is just. And as he has given his intelligent creatures laws, and annexed punishments to the breach of them, we must conclude, that we all are free agents, in so far forth as to be able to choose whether to obey or violate them. This is the only satisfactory resolution to which I could ever bring my mind, after much reading and deep investigation of the subject. For, when I consider that every creature must be such as the Creator has made it; that as he is infinite, eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent, there can be no succession with him; all things are continually before him, and consequently nothing can be otherwise than as it is; and, that as he existed before all things, and fills all space, all things must be of him; that although by giving being to a variety of creatures, and appointing them duties to perform, he has induced a succession of actions, and a succession of ideas in their minds, which constitutes time with respect to them; yet, with the Creator, all is unity and instant: and, therefore, any attempt to reconcile the free agency of his creatures with his infinity and eternity, must be vain and idle in so limited a being as man. Nay, it must be beyond the comprehension of the highest archangel, for nothing created can comprehend itself; how much less then the infinite Creator.

The *justice* of the Creator, as I have already said, affords therefore the only solution of the difficulty ; and, perhaps, he may require it as a test of our humility, that we submit to the declarations of his will, without presuming to account for their fitness. Had our Polemics adopted this mode of reasoning, what a vast waste of ink and paper might have been saved, and that leisure, and those hands which were so uselessly, if not mischievously employed, have been so much more beneficially occupied in administering to the necessities, and in improving the minds of their fellow-creatures.

In adopting the Mosaic history of man's creation, I have assumed him to have been the immediate object of his Creator's care ; and, that both his mental and bodily wants were supplied by supernatural means. The manner in which that was done is not related, but from what we are told of the modes in which the Creator made communications to Adam's descendants, we may form our opinion of that which was made use of in his case. Here it may be proper, once for all, to discuss that important question, to which the various appearances of the Elohim to men, as recorded in the scriptures, necessarily gives rise, viz. what we are to understand by these passages, which assert that the Elohim spake

and appeared to men under different shapes and forms?

That the Creator is an infinite, eternal, omnipotent, and omniscient spirit, is universally acknowledged by all intelligent men; although it seems impossible for any created and consequently finite creature, to form a positive idea of such a being; for, in order to form a positive idea, it is necessary that the mind should embrace the object; in doing which we necessarily limit, confine, or give it a shape or figure, which cannot be done with that which is infinite and incomprehensible. The only idea, therefore, that a finite creature can form of an infinite purely spiritual being, must be merely negative: with such an idea, the mind will not however rest satisfied, but will have recourse to the expedient of personifying, or giving him a shape or figure which it can comprehend, and to which it may address its adoration. This expedient appears from scripture to have been countenanced by the Creator himself, as in the earliest revelations he made of his will to men, he leads them to entertain ideas of his personal locality. For, although he uses the voice of an angel, in speaking to Adam, to Eve, to the serpent, to Cain, and to Noah, the words are in the first person, and to be understood as words pronounced by the Creator himself. This locality

of person is still more confirmed by such passages as imply locality of place or residence. The heaven, or the heaven of heavens, or the third heaven, or the highest heaven, is said to be his throne, and there all superior intelligences are said to attend ; and thither men are desired to direct their prayers and praises. Nor is there any command or denunciation of displeasure at our localizing or personifying the Deity in our conceptions of him, in the whole history of God's dealing with man, antecedent to the publication of the Decalogue: nay, the injunctions contained therein are only pointed against the adoration of idols, or the representatives of creatures. And although Moses enjoins the Israelites to form no image, nor to make any idol to worship, as the representation of the Deity ; he allows them to entertain ideas of his locality and even personality, by telling them that he was a consuming fire ;—that they heard his voice out of the fire ;—that it was God who spoke the words of the Decalogue. Their ideas of personality or locality were still more authorised by the symbolical appearances on the Tabernacle, and the construction of a mercy-seat over the ark, overshadowed by the wings of the cherubims ; and this locality of the Deity is continued down to the coming of Christ. That personifying went along with localizing, is not only to be supposed

from the nature of things, but is clearly to be proved from the writings of Moses himself, and of all the inspired penmen under the Mosaic dispensation; and, that such personification consisted in giving to the deity a human figure, is clearly ascertained by the terms made use of by them all. Thus, in Gen. chap. iii. verse 8, “They heard the *voice* of the Lord God walking in the garden, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the *presence* of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.” Chap. vi. ver. 6.—It grieved him (God) at his *heart* that he had made man. Ver. 12.—And God *looked* upon the earth. Chap. viii. ver. 21.—And the Lord *smelled* a sweet savour, and the Lord said in his *heart*. Exodus, chap. xiii. ver. 21.—And the Lord *went* before by day in a pillar of a cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire. Chap. xiv. ver. 24.—The Lord *looked* unto the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire, and of the cloud. Chap. xv. ver. 3.—The Lord is a *man of war*. Ver. 6.—Thy *right hand*, O Lord, is become glorious; thy *right hand*, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. Ver. 8.—And with the blast of thy *nostrils* the waters were gathered together. Ver. 12.—Thou stretched out thy *right hand*. Ver. 16.—By the greatness of thy *arm* they shall be as still as a stone. Ver. 17.—Thou shalt plant them in the sanctuary which

thy *hands* have established. Chap. xix. ver. 9. —And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto them in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I *speake* with thee. Chap. xxiv. ver. 9, 10, 11. —Then went up Moses and Aaron, and Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they *saw* the God of Israel, and there was under his *feet*, as it were, a paved work of sapphire-stone, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness : and upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his *hand* ; also they *saw* God, and did eat and drink. Chap. xxv. ver. 17, &c. —And thou shalt make a mercy-seat, and thou shalt make two cherubims, one on the one end of the mercy-seat, and the other on the other end, with their faces towards the mercy-seat, and their wings stretched forth on high, covering the mercy-seat ; and thou shalt put the mercy-seat upon the ark, and there I will *meet* *with* thee, and I will *commune* with thee from above the mercy-seat, from *between* the cherubims, of all things which I shall give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel. Chap. xxix. ver. 42, and 43. —This shall be a continual burnt-offering before the Lord, in the tabernacle where I will *meet* you to *speake* there unto you, and there I will *meet* with the children of Israel. Ver. 45. —And I will *dwell* amongst the children of Israel, and will be their God.

Chap. xxxi. ver. 18.—And he gave unto Moses two tables of stone written with the *finger* of God. Chap. xxxii. ver. 16.—And the tables were the *work* of God, and the *writing* was the *writing* of God graven on the tables. Chap. xxxiii. ver. 20.—Thou canst not see my *face*; for there shall no man see my *face* and live. Ver. 22.—I will cover thee with mine *hand*, and I will take away my *hand*, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my *face* shall not be seen. Chap. xxxiv. ver. 5, and 6.—And the Lord descended in the cloud upon Mount Sinai, and *stood* with Moses there. Deut. chap. iv. ver. 36.—Out of heaven he made thee to hear *his voice*, that he might instruct thee; and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire, and thou heardest his *words* out of the midst of the fire. Chap. iii. ver. 24.—O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy mighty *hand*; for what God is there in heaven or earth that can do according to thy works and thy might? Chap. xxxii. ver. 39 and 40.—Neither is there any that can deliver out of my *hand*; for I lift up *my hand* to heaven, and say I live for ever. And the visions of Daniel and Ezekiel are still more decided representations of the Deity under a human form; and there are frequent allusions of the same kind in the other prophets. I forbear to quote any instances from either the Book of Job or the Psalms,

as both are poetical compositions, and poets have in all ages taken great liberties with the Deity; although, as some of the psalms were used in the temple, in actual addresses to the Deity, their personifications might be considered as fully sanctioned.

From all which it appears, that the infinite, eternal Creator, had condescended to make such representations of himself to his creatures as they were capable of comprehending. Nor does this inference apply to men only; for, as I have already observed, it must be equally impossible for creatures of the highest order and most exalted intellect, to comprehend the infinite and eternal Creator, as it is for man; because nothing that is finite or temporary, can possibly comprehend what is infinite and eternal; and as the ubiquity of the Deity supercedes all possibility of a partial or local presence, the divine majesty which is equally present throughout the universe, cannot be more fitly adored or attended in one part of infinite space than another. Some local representation seems, therefore, to have been necessary from the beginning of all things, as the object to which all intelligent beings were to direct their adoration.

This local representative must have been the

efficient agent by which all things were made, and this agent is most properly stiled the son of God; and that spirit by which he acts and governs all creatures, is with equal propriety stiled, the Holy Ghost, or eternal spirit of God. Thus, without having recourse to the unintelligible jargon of a beatific vision, we have a rational, as well as scriptural account of the divine œconomy; and the necessary pre-existence of the Son and Holy Ghost before all created beings, as through them all things are and were created. The Son thus representing the infinite and incomprehensible Deity, became a proper object of the adoration of all creatures; his local presence became the throne of the divine Majesty, and in him dwelt the fullness of the godhead bodily; or appeared in a bodily shape. As he existed before all time, and was to continue in his high office until all time, and all created beings should have an end; he is properly stiled, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: appellations which cannot belong to the infinite and eternal Creator, who, having neither beginning or ending, cannot be said to be either the first or the last.

How, or when, the Son or Holy Ghost were produced, is far beyond the comprehension of finite beings. Our ideas are necessarily bounded by time and creation; and, as they existed before

all time, and before all creation, we must content ourselves with our ignorance, and submit to receive what has been revealed to us respecting them, as all we can know.

I am aware, that it is said, these expressions of personality and locality which I have quoted are metaphorical, and are used in condescension to our capacities; but surely, that which we should allow to be a good reason in the mouth of a foolish nurse, for talking nonsense to her baby, is impious and absurd when applied to the Creator; as it supposes the all-wise Being to form creatures with capacities incapable of knowing the truth, and whom he would be under the necessity of deceiving by false representations of himself, and thereby misleading them to commit that idolatry which he had forbidden under the severest denunciations of his anger. This leads me to consider, how we are to understand the several communications the Creator has been pleased to make of his will to mankind, in the different ages of the world; and for the more certain proceeding in this momentous enquiry, I shall submit the following axioms as the principle upon which I shall conduct it.

First, That the Creator is an infinite, eternal,

omniscient, omnipotent, and incomprehensible spirit*.

* Metaphysicians, who acknowledge the Deity to be infinite, eternal, and incomprehensible, will, notwithstanding, set about defining and describing him. They begin, with giving him a being, and then proceed to dress him up with attributes, and moral qualities, like a Jew pedlar hung round with garters and ribbons, looking-glasses and history books; and, lest he should not employ those attributes and qualities properly, they give him laws, the eternal rule of right, and the unalterable fitness of things, by which he must govern himself. And, to make all sure, they give him a sort of governess, a female of their own creation, called, Dame Nature, whose will he must obey at all times, except upon some extraordinary occasions, when they allow him to do things to astonish and surprize. How much of all this nonsense might have been spared; if these ingenious investigators had recollected, that the Deity, whom they allow to be infinite, eternal, and incomprehensible, can have no attributes, can have no qualities, can be bound by no laws. Omnipotence is his essence; omniscience is his essence; goodness is his essence; justice is his essence: whatever he is, he is essentially so. His will is the only law of the universe, and whatever he wills, is, therefore, just and good; not because it is so in itself, for nothing can be either just or good, bad or unjust of itself, but because he wills it. Nothing has any nature of itself, but such as he has given it. Had he thought fit, that men should have been oviparous, and fowls viviparous, it would have been the nature of women to lay eggs, and of hens to bring forth live chickens. His will was antecedent to all creation, and he formed all intelligent creatures with capacities to perceive the fitness of what he wills. The surface of the earth is not covered with green, because green is the most pleasing to our eyes, but our eyes are formed to be pleased

Secondly, That nothing is either just or fit, but because the Creator has willed it.

Thirdly, That as he needeth not experience to prove the fitness of his decrees, they must necessarily be immutable.

Fourthly, That he well knows the capacities and abilities of all his creatures.

Fifthly, That he is incapable of exacting from them, what they have not capacity to know, or ability to perform.

Sixthly, That he is incapable of misleading them into error.

Seventhly, that when he makes revelations of his will, he accompanies them with such marks of their being his, as will enable those of his

with green, because the Creator has given that colour to the surface of the earth. Had he willed that there should have been neither sun, moon, or stars in our system, our minds would have been formed to have perceived the utility of continual darkness, and to have considered him as dwelling in impenetrable darkness. This necessity of perceiving and judging according to our nature, does not, however, lessen our responsibility. His will is our law, and we are made so as to perceive its fitness, and, consequently, are responsible for not obeying, whenever we can discover or perceive it.

creatures to whom they are made to be certain they come from him.

Eighthly, That having established a regular and settled order of things in the natural world, any change or suspension of that order by a creature, as an evidence that his declarations are communications from the Creator, is a sufficient proof that they are so. And, that as men are not endowed with a fore-knowledge of events, which are the result of the free agency of others, the foretelling such events is a proof of supernatural intelligence in the foreteller, and when used in confirmation of the truth of a declaration, that his communications are the will of the Creator, must be so received. Miracles and prophecy, therefore, appear to be the only tests which our condition of men furnish, by which to try the authenticity of all promulgations of the Creator's will.

Ninthly, That when a communication is duly authenticated as coming from the Creator, we are bound to adopt it ; although we cannot reconcile its fitness to our own conceptions of what is just and fit.

Tenthly, That all duly authenticated communications of the Creator's will, are to be understood in the plain and obvious meaning of the

terms in which they are delivered ; when that meaning is not repugnant to former communications, or contradictory to the uniform evidence of our senses, or the deductions of our reason.

Eleventhly, That where the evidence of miracles or prophecy have vouched the authority of the promulgator of any doctrine, which, in the plain and obvious meaning of the terms in which it is delivered, is repugnant to some former communication, or contradicts the information of our senses and the deductions of our reason, it is justifiable to give the terms such a metaphorical or allegorical meaning as may reconcile them to both.

That Moses wrought miracles, and predicted future events, must be admitted by all, who allow the truth of any history ; and, consequently, that he was favoured with supernatural communications : and, whenever he declares the will of the Creator, as communicated to him, it must be accepted as the Creator's will. But it by no means follows, that every historical fact, which either he has set down, or directed to be compiled, is a divine illumination.

As the events recorded in the first chapter of Genesis could not be known to Adam, but by su-

pernatural information, that chapter, and the three first verses of the second, which are improperly separated from it, must be received as of divine authority; but the remaining verses of the second chapter, carry upon their face the marks of traditional compilation, and a compilation made after the promulgation of the Decalogue; and, indeed, the accounts seem to have been taken from two several traditions, or the traditions of two different nations; for some of the verses are a repetition of the facts contained in the first chapter, but differently told; others are inconsistent with the narrative; and three of the verses are evidently misplaced*; and, when we recollect that the Midianites were as nearly related to Abraham as the Israelites, and that

* Genesis, chap. i. ver. 11.—The earth, on the third day, brought forth grass and herbs and trees.

Ver. 27.—So God (on the sixth day) created man in his image; in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them. Ver. 28.—And God blessed them, and said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.

Verse 29.—And God said (on the sixth day) behold I have given you (male and female) every herb and every

Genesis, chap. ii. ver. 4 and 5.—In the day that the Lord God created the heavens and the earth, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb before it grew.

Chap. ii. ver. 7.—And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul. Ver. 18.—And the Lord said, it is not good for man to be alone: I will make him a help meet for him

Verse 8. &c.—And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man that he had form-

the Midianites continued to reside in the same country where their forefathers first settled, and were always a sovereign and independent people; we must allow that they were as likely at least, to preserve a just account of their origin, as the Israelites, who were for two hundred years under the Ægyptian yoke; and, it should seem, not permitted to make any records.

The narrative contained in the first chapter, I therefore conceive to be that of the Midianites, and the following that of the Israelites, as it is

tree in which is fruit to you; it shall be for meat.

ed: and out of the ground made he to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Ver. 15.—And the Lord took the man, and put him in the garden to dress it, and to keep it: and, ver. 16—he commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat.

Chap. v.—This is the book of the generation of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him: male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

The 8th verse and the 15th, of chap ii. are repetitions; the 19th and 20th should have followed the 17th; and the 24th is an absurdity, if it be not an interpolation of the compiler or copier.

much more imperfect, and mixes a reference to their future law. Now we know Moses had full opportunity of being acquainted with the Midianites' records and traditions, both before he brought the Israelites out of Egypt, and afterwards by means of his father-in-law, who was a priest of Midian, and from Jethro's having introduced sacrifices among the Israelites before the promulgation of the law; and, from the excellent advice he gave to Moses, it appears that the Midianites had preserved the religion of Abraham in its purity, and were governed by an admirable polity upon the Patriarchal plan; and as the Israelites could no otherwise have got the account of Balaam's transaction, it is a proof that the Midianites were acquainted with letters, and made public records.

The genealogy of the Edomites, inserted in the Book of Numbers, shews that Esau's descendants also kept registers, and that Moses had access to them. And, as they had likewise continued in the same country, in which Esau had first settled, which was at no great distance from the countries in which Abraham and Isaac had dwelt; (for we find Esau attended with Jacob at Isaac's funeral) their tradition of past times was as likely to be correct as either of the others;

and, no doubt, Moses availed himself of it, to compare with them. The insertion of the story of Lot, in the nineteenth chapter, is another proof, that Moses compiled from the Midianitish records; for that transaction happened after Abraham and Lot had separated, and never met again; whereas the Moabites, who were the descendants of the incestuous intercourse, had incorporated or connected with the Midianites,

Before Abraham went down into Egypt, the history is extremely brief and incorrect*; but it should seem from the particular manner in which subsequent transactions are recorded, that

* The commentators upon the Old Testament, who generally possess more piety than genius, and are better acquainted with the Hebrew language, than with oriental customs and manners, find great difficulty in reconciling Sarah's presenting her Egyptian handmaid to Abraham, and his accepting the offer; with our notions of conjugal fidelity. Howell, who was one of the most learned among them, in a note upon the passage, calls upon his readers, to remark the delicate continence of Abraham, in not taking Hagar to his bed, until his wife had brought her to him. These idle apologies arise out of the ignorance of the commentators, of the actual proportion between the sexes in the East; where, it is generally known, and Mr. Bruce positively asserts, that there are many more females than males born; and, as marriage is only a positive institution, every legislature has a right to regulate it in the manner most likely to answer the purpose of the Creator, of peopling the earth. In Europe, and especially in the

he either acquired a knowledge of letters there, or had brought a scribe with him when he returned. For, that the Egyptians were then in possession of letters, may certainly be collected from the History of Joseph, which was undoubtedly compiled under his own direction. And that the Israelites were also acquainted with letters when they came out of Egypt, cannot be doubted, from Moses directing them to write the words of the law upon pillars, when they went over Jordan; and also to write the blessings and curses upon different pillars, and set them upon different mountains. But, still, more particularly from his commanding them to bind his words for a sign upon their hands, and to write them upon the posts of their houses, and upon their gates.

Now, had Moses written this part of the book of Genesis by inspiration, the whole would have been one uniform narrative; there would have been no contrariety of accounts, nor any repeti-

British dominions, it appears from the annual registers of births, that the proportion between the sexes is as exact as possible, the surplus number of males being no more than equivalent to the greater losses that sex is exposed to than the other; consequently it becomes the duty of the British legislature, to prevent polygamy or concubinage, though it may be proper to allow them in the countries of the East.

tions of the same facts ; nor would the stile of the composition be so various ; nor would Moses have been at any loss for materials to make the history complete, by giving an account of the Israelites during the whole of their continuance in Egypt, two hundred years of which are entirely wanting.

We must, therefore, carefully distinguish between such parts of the Pentateuch as are merely historical, and those which are declarations of the will of the Creator ; but although we should not allow the historical parts to be the dictation of the Holy Spirit, they ought to be received as the acknowledged records of the people to whom they relate, but liable to have been interpolated and corrupted, as all other ancient histories have been.

The instances given of the communications of the Creator's will to man before the flood, are but few ; and, indeed, the whole history of the period between the creation and the destruction of the antediluvian race of men, is comprized in seven short chapters. It seems, however, from the manner in which those communications were made, compared with those that followed, that celestial beings, or creatures of a superior nature, were employed in making them ; and, that the term

Elohim, was used as the distinguishing title of these celestial ministers ; until some men became possessed of great property, and arrogated to themselves the same appellation. For so I think we ought to understand that expression in the 26th verse of the 4th chapter of Genesis, which has given so much trouble to commentators ; for, from what follows in the sixth chapter, that the sons of the Elohim took wives from among the daughters of men, it is evident that a distinction of orders had then taken place, and that the higher orders had assumed the name of Elohim, and tyrannized over the inferior classes ; and what confirms me in this opinion is, that the name or title of Elohim is given after the flood to Abraham and other great men, which shews it to have been so used before. Nor ought we to think this extraordinary, when we do the same thing ourselves. We call the king, his most sacred Majesty ; a duke, the most high and puissant ; and even our bishops are called, Lords spiritual. That these celestial ministers were employed in the first formation of the earth, and of all things therein, under the direction of the Divine Agent, may, I think, be collected from the gradual process of six days ; the declaration that the Divine Agent daily approved of the work, and the rest which is said to have taken place on the seventh, all which is inconsistent

with the supposition that the fabric and productions were effected by the immediate fiat or will of the Creator ; and what Job says of the Sons of God shouting for joy, when the work was compleated and approved, gives countenance to this conjecture*. Many instances of this ministry will occur in the future history of Noah's descendants, from whose time till Jacob's going down into Egypt, they made communications in the human shape, though sometimes they communicated by dreams and visions.

* There are two enormous defects, says Berrington, in the system of attraction ; the one, that the planets are kept in their courses by an immechanical power of gravitation and mutual attraction ; the other, that the progressive motion of the planets is continued by their moving in a vacuum or in a medium incapable of resistance. Now, though the pressure of the atmosphere upon the body must resist its motion forward, and give it a circular motion ; yet the continual action of some other power is necessary to drive it forward. I believe, continues Berrington, it might be easily proved that spiritual agents can give motion to bodies, though bodies cannot give it to themselves. God, the most spiritual being, certainly can ; and, in all probability, angels, and the souls of men, can set bodies in motion : hence, Aristotle held, that the progressive motion of the planets is carried and continued by intelligences. And the learned Bayle thinks, that such motions cannot be performed without them : his words are, “ As for the opinion of those who admit of moving intelligences as assistant forms, I don't see how one can be without them ; and I fancy the Copernicans will fall into it sooner or later in relation to their planets.”

In order to bring the whole of the scripture account of the ministry of angels together, I shall anticipate what properly belongs to a future period, by adding the following extracts from the New Testament.

Matt. chap. i. ver. 20.—*The angel of the Lord appeared to him (Joseph) in a dream.* Again, ch. ii. ver. 13.—*And when they (the wise men) were departed, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.* Chap. iv.—*The tempter (the devil) came to Jesus, and the devil taketh him, &c. and there the devil leaveth him, and angels came and ministered unto him,* chap. xiii. Parable of the seed, ver. 19.—*Then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.* The parable of the tares, ver. 29.—*The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The reapers are the angels.* Ver. 41.—*The son of man shall send forth his angels; and,* ver. 49.—*The angels shall come forth.* Chap. xvi. ver. 23.—*But Christ turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me, &c.* Chap. xvii. ver. 3.—*And there appeared unto him Moses and Elias talking with him.* Chap. xxiv. ver. 31.—*And he shall send his angels.* Chap. xxviii. ver. 2.—*And the angel of the Lord descended from heaven.* Ver. 5.—*And the angel answered and said unto the women, &c.* And in

Luke, chap. i. there is a particular account of the mission of the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, and also to the Virgin Mary, and of his conversation with them. I forbear giving any instances of the demoniacs, because it is not agreed what they were; though Christ, in Mark, chap. vii. ver. 29, expressly tells the mother of one of the possessed, that *the devil was gone out of her daughter.*

In the Acts of the Apostles, chap. xvi. it is said, *That a man of Macedonia appeared to Paul in a vision.*

In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul tells them in the sixteenth chapter, *that the God of peace shall shortly bruise Satan under their feet.* In the first to the Corinthians, he says, *know ye not that we shall judge angels;* and, in his second he tells them, *that we had done certain things, lest Satan should get an advantage of them, for we are not ignorant of his devices;* and, in the fourth chapter, he speaks of certain of them, *in whom the god of this world hath blinded their minds;* and in the eleventh, he says, *Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.* In his Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iv. he exhorts them, *neither to give place to the devil;* and he tells the Thessalonians, chap. ii. *that Satan hin-*

dered him from doing what he intended. In his Epistle to Timothy, before quoted, he speaks of *Jannes and Jambres withstanding Moses*; and Jude tells us of the controverfy between *Michael and Satan*.

Now, as we find that angels were placed to guard the tree of life—that angels were sent to convey Lot, his wife, and daughters, out of Sodom—that an angel is sent to stop Balaam in his way—that one is sent to destroy the host of Sennacherib—that another is sent to Mary, to announce her conception—that angels are sent to minister to Christ in the wilderness—that they are sent to strengthen him in his passion—that one is sent to deliver Peter out of prison—that they are said to encamp round the dwellings of the just—that they are said to have a charge over Christ to bear him in their hands lest he should bruise his feet against a stone; Ought we not to understand that the Almighty exercises his providence by their ministry? And when Christ says, think you, that I could not pray my father, and he would send more than ten legions of angels; and when he says, that the son of man shall come with the angels of God and shall send his angels to the four winds, to bring the dead before him—and when he says, the angels are the reapers who are to gather the harvest, and

also separate the good corn from the tares—Does he not clearly point out the agency of angels even in those things in which he himself is personally present?

Let those now who reject this accumulation of evidence of the ministry of angels in the government of the universe, find out some other suitable employment for those myriads of superior intelligences; for, surely it is inconsistent both with the wisdom of the Deity, and their own exalted capacities, to suppose them to have been brought into being, for no other purpose than, as Quin ludicrously observed, “to sit naked upon a wet cloud, singing hallalujahs to all eternity.”

What we call conscience, appears to be the operation of the good or evil angel upon the soul of man; for it is difficult to suppose the same Being who had reasoned himself into the committal of an action, should, after it was committed, feel repugnance for having done it without any extraneous cause. In the instance recorded of David, we find he felt no repugnance, on account of Uriah, until Nathan reproached him with it. Nor did Ahab, when he went to take possession of Nabath's vineyard, feel remorse for his murder, until Elisha met him and charged him with it. What these prophets did, therefore, visi-

bly and sensibly, the good or evil angel does invisibly ; for sometimes it may be the evil angel who excites the horror of recollection without hope of pardon, that he may drive the culprit, by desperation, to the committal of some greater enormity, or to suicide. By this ministry of angels, many difficulties in the natural and moral world are solved, and it is full of comfort and consolation. The extraordinary forebodings and presentiments we often feel, as well as the extraordinary information of dreams, may also be readily accounted for upon the same hypothesis.

But to return to the history. To Moses and the Israelites the communications were made under symbolical appearances ; for the fire in the bush, and the pillar of fire, and the cloud in their journies, and the descent and resting upon, and removal of the cloud from the ark, and the sound of the trumpet, and thunderings, and lightnings upon Mount Sinai, were all symbolic representations ; and, though we are told that Moses was favoured with a sight of the Divine Agent personified, yet his communications are said to be by a voice from the seat of mercy. We are told also, that the urim was put into Aaron's breast-plate ; but we do not find that any communications were made by it to Moses ; but after Moses' death, all communications to Joshua

were probably made by it. How much longer such communications were continued we are not told; but they must have ceased in the time of the Judges, as there is no mention of them; but the spirit of the Lord is said to have come upon Othniel, who delivered Israel from the king of Mesopotamia; and afterwards we find Deborah called a prophetess. And when the Israelites were oppressed by the Midianites, a prophet was sent to them. A man of God is also said to have come to Eli, before the communication by Samuel; and from thence forward it appears, that all communications were made by prophets till the appearance of Christ.

So that the modes by which the Creator's will has been made known to men, may be reduced to these eight: first, by the voice of celestial ministers; second, by celestial ministers in human forms; third, by dreams and visions; fourth, by symbolic appearances; fifth, by oracular responses; sixth, by inspiration of prophets; seventh, by Jesus Christ the Divine Agent in human flesh; and, lastly, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, through the apostles and their immediate successors ordained by them. Since which, men seem to be left to the records of what is past, to inform themselves of the Creator's will; for there is no subsequent instance of any

man being endowed with the power of working miracles, or of predicting future events, to vouch his claim to supernatural illumination; and where those are wanting, no credit ought to be given to any such pretences.

That the Divine Agent continues to govern the universe, as he ever did, by the ministry of a superior order of beings, we have, as I have shewn, many proofs in the New Testament as well as in the Old; and, that there are orders of beings who are enemies to man, we have, as I have likewise shewn, the same indubitable testimony; and perhaps the free agency of man, arises out of the contradictory impressions or representations made or produced in him by those opposite orders; and, that happiness or misery is the result of the choice he makes. No one doubts of the unceasing influence or workings of the same evil spirit, which we are told perverted our first parents, to seduce their offspring; and why should we suppose our Creator, or his Divine Agent, would not permit the good spirits to use their endeavours to preserve us? It is true, we are directed to pray for the divine grace to assist us against our enemy, and to beg our Creator to send his Holy Spirit to guide us; but if that were granted us immediately from the Deity, there would be an end of our warfare, and of our free

agency ; as no created being could withstand or maintain a competition with the Creator or his Divine Agent, or eternal Spirit. That assistance, therefore, to be less than irresistible, must be through the ministry of created spirits, whom St. Paul tells us, are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation. With them, however powerful, the evil spirits may still maintain a dispute in the human intellect, and by offering a choice to the will, give the free agent a claim to reward for obedience, or render him obnoxious to punishment for apostacy.

PART II.

HAVING thus endeavoured to trace the several modes of the supernatural communications made to man; and to form some criterion to distinguish what are really divine revelations, from what are indiscriminately classed with them; and having examined the narrative of the great events of the creation, and fall of man, as recorded in the Book of Genesis; I shall proceed to observe upon the account we find there, of that other great event, the destruction of mankind by a general deluge.

When we consider the present state of the globe, and of navigation, the impossibility of destroying its inhabitants by a flood is obvious; yet that circumstance does not seem to have occurred to any of the writers upon the deluge. Even Burnet, whose theory would have found great support from it, has taken no notice of it; for although we should not suppose the antediluvians to have been as expert navigators or ship-builders as those of the present age; yet, had

the seas which we now see divide the different parts of the earth existed, and mankind been half as numerous as they are supposed to have been before the flood, they must have constructed many boats and vessels in 1656 years, which are computed to have passed between the creation and that event. Nor would the plains of Mesopotamia have been judged the fittest place for constructing the ark; as, had the mountains which surround those plains then existed, when the rising of the waters had set it on float, the mere undulation of the waves must have dashed the unweildly vessel to pieces against the sides of such mountains, or at least have overset it with all its crew. Besides, if there had been mountains there must have been rain, and consequently rainbows; and the promise that they should appear after the flood, if they had appeared before, would have been no security that another flood would not happen. And, although the text says, that the fowls were destroyed, yet those which live upon the waters, with all æquatic animals, if they had been preserved, would have been more numerous than they now are, from having such a start of all terrestrial creatures. But the greatest difficulty of all is, the immensity of the body of water which it would require to cover the whole surface of the earth, fifteen cubits above the tops of the Andes,

and the manner of disposing of it afterwards to render the plains and vallies habitable for man, which we are told was done in two months. Now all these objections are readily surmounted, by supposing with Burnet, that the earth was a perfect spheroid before the deluge, with its axis parallel to the poles, and, that the crust or shell inclosed water, as the shell of an egg does its yolk. The rising of water fifteen cubits, or twenty-two feet perpendicular upon the surface, even by a continued rain of forty days, may easily be supposed; and, as the inhabitants of the earth were not accustomed to raise edifices even to that height, there would have been no places for them to fly to, to avoid being overwhelmed by it. The breaking in of the crust in some places, would necessarily occasion eruptions on the opposite side, and while the mountains were thus formed on the one hand, space was made for the reception of the superabundant waters on the other; and thus seas were formed, and mountains, and rivers.

Against this hypothesis, the express words of the history are produced; where it is said, that God called the gathering of the waters together, sea; that the waters brought forth abundantly of living creatures; that a river went out of Eden to water the garden, which afterwards

divided into four streams ; and, that all the high hills and mountains were covered at the time of the flood. But the same answer may be given to this objection, as is given to that of a man being said to leave his father and mother before any existed ; which is, that the editor or compiler describes things as they were at the time he wrote, and gives to places the names which they bore when the compilation was made, and which appears to have been after the promulgation of the Decalogue from Mount Sinai ; and, had not Moses said, that the tops of the mountains were covered, the Israelites might have supposed, that all mankind were not destroyed, unless he told them what the state of the earth was before the flood, with which it does not appear he was acquainted. The object of the narrative is, to convince the Israelites first, that all things which exist were made by one common Creator ; and, secondly, that every terrestrial creature was destroyed by the flood, except Noah and his family, and the creatures he preserved ; and, this was more readily and effectually done by applying the narrative to the then present state of the earth, than to its former circumstances. Another objection to the supposition, that there were neither seas or rivers in the antediluvian world, is the existence of fish, which it is said, must in that case have been created afterwards.

To this I will answer, by asking the objector, What became of all the fresh water fish which cannot live in the sea, if the earth was covered over by salt-water? Or if he supposes from the great quantity of rain which fell, that the covering was fresh, which on account of its levity continued on the top, from the level of the plains, to twelve cubits above the Andes, or about three miles in depth, What became of such sea-fish as cannot live in fresh-water, or without air? The truth is, it is impossible to surmount every difficulty, or to answer every objection which may be raised to the short history we have of this most extraordinary event. The best we can do, therefore, is, to adopt that hypothesis which appears the most free from objection, most reconcileable to the text, and to what we know of the Creator's manner of dealing with his creatures. If we follow the literal expression, that the flood was universal, and adopt the calculations which have been made of the number of mankind then upon the earth, which some compute at two hundred millions of millions; and compare the declaration of the angel to Abraham, that he would spare all the guilty inhabitants of Sodom for the sake of five religious persons, if they could be found in that populous city; (and we find that the four that were found, were carried out of it) with the prefer-

vation of only eight persons, out of two hundred millions of millions, spread over the whole face of the earth; we must be astonished indeed at the universal depravity which could have taken place, especially in the line of Seth, in so short a space as about six hundred and fifty years after Adam's death: or we must impute to the Creator, the destruction of the innocent with the guilty. To avoid either consequence, the one of which is impious, and the other improbable, it is only necessary to consider the subject more attentively, and the text itself will shew us, that the number of men then upon the earth could not be more than sufficient to people as much of Asia and Africa, as was afterwards contained in the Assyrian empire; for, either their years were much shorter than ours, or they begun to procreate much later, and had fewer children before the flood than after it. Which latter supposition is not probable, as nature must then have been more vigorous. Adam is said, to have been one hundred and thirty years old when he begat Seth; Seth was one hundred and nine years old when he begat Enos; Enos was ninety when he begat Cainan; Cainan was seventy when he begat Mahalaleel; Mahalaleel was sixty-five, when he begat Jared; Jared was one hundred and sixty-two, when he begat Enoch; Enoch was sixty-five when he begat Methuselah; Methuse-

lah was one hundred and eighty-seven when he begat Lamech ; Lamech was one hundred and eighty-two when he begat Noah ; and Noah was five hundred years old when he begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth ; and Shem was an hundred years old when he begat Arphaxad. Now, on the other hand, we see how much earlier they are said to have begun to propagate after the flood ; for Arphaxad was only thirty-five when he begat Salah ; Salah thirty when he begat Eber ; Eber thirty-four when he begat Peleg ; Peleg thirty when he begat Reu ; Reu thirty-two when he begat Serug ; Serug thirty when he begat Nahor ; and Nahor twenty-nine when he begat Terah ; which shews that their years were computed differently before and after the flood. For it is not allowable to suppose, that the births of only those descendants of Seth, who were Noah's ancestors, are recorded, and that there might have been several others born before them, as that supposition is not only unwarranted by the text, but is in direct contradiction to it ; for we are assured that Seth was the third son of Adam, and that Adam was an hundred and thirty years old when he begat him, and Shem was ninety-eight years old when he went into the ark, and it cannot be supposed that either he or his brothers had any children then, as they took none into it with them ; and, if Noah had

other children, besides Shem, Ham, and Japheth, it would have been strange indeed if he had left them all to perish.

If I was to hazard a conjecture upon this subject, I would suppose that the antediluvians computed their years by the revolutions of the moon; for, if we suppose with Burnet, that the axis of the earth was always parallel to the pole, and the earth constantly revolved upon the equator, there could have been no change of seasons, no lengthning or shortning of days or nights, nor such alterations in the face of the heavens, or among the heavenly bodies, except the moon, as men would be apt to mark the lapse of time by. That they, however, reckoned every change of the moon a year, I do not imagine, for that would lead to great absurdities on the other hand; but, in order to disburthen their minds from reckoning by the moon's change, which happened so frequently; they would endeavour to find out conjunctions between her and the sun, or other bodies, which occurred in a certain number of revolutions, and make such conjunctions their epochs, as we do with the cycles of the moon, and of the sun; for there is no reason why they should have fixed upon twelve or thirteen changes for their epoch more than any other number. The supposition of the earth's antedi-

luvian parallel state, removes many difficulties, and is attended with many conveniences, which have not hitherto been noticed ; and it accounts for that promise to Noah after the flood, that there should be summer and winter, feed-time and harvest in future ; which implies, that there had been no change of seasons before that time. Besides, all hypotheses concur in placing the first pair somewhere in Asia, and in a warm climate, which, indeed, their want of clothing made necessary ; and, as in case they had preserved their innocence, they would have continued where they were first placed : that circumstance proves they would have suffered no such change of climate as would have rendered clothing necessary one part of the year more than another ; which shews the sun did not pass from one tropic to the other, but kept always the same course along the equator ; and it should seem that their situation was within the tropic of Cancer ; for, when they were driven out, as they were sent to the north, their covering of skins became necessary. And it is natural to suppose, that Cain went to the south with a sister, who he had taken for his wife, as his occupation of a tiller of the ground would lead him to remove nearer the sun, whose genial heat would ripen his fruit, and whose exhalations in the day produced a dew to water his grounds in the night. From hence a race of

darker complexion than the children of Seth would be the natural consequence. And if we suppose Ham to have taken his wife from among them, we have a reason for his family's choosing to emigrate to Egypt and Ethiopia, after the dispersion, and for the black colour of the Ethiopians and others, his unmixed descendants.

This supposition of Ham's having taken his wife from between the tropics, has, I believe, never before been made the ground of accounting for the black colour of the Africans; and, indeed, it appears very extraordinary, that no notice has ever been taken of the wives of either of Noah's sons, or of their antediluvian residence, though they are all three stated to have wives, and the youngest of the sons was probably fourscore when they went into the ark; for, although they may have wrought with their father in building the ark, and went into it with him, it does not follow that they had always remained with him from their birth, or were not called by him from their different residences in consequence of the divine communication that had been made to him; and their different routs after the dispersion, was probably determined by what they had before known of the earth and of its climates, though its general fertility must have been much encreased by the mud or slime left upon it by the flood. I shall

only make one more observation upon this part of the history, which is, that the third verse of the sixth chapter is evidently an interpolation; for the age of man was not reduced to one hundred and twenty years till after Jacob, who lived one hundred and forty-seven years, which was less than any of his predecessors had lived.

The account of the division of the earth among the descendants of Noah's three sons, which is given in the tenth chapter of Genesis, ought to have followed, and not preceded that of their dispersion given in the eleventh; for it is evident, from their having built a tower to make them a name, and their being of one language, that they lived together, and intended to continue to live as one people; which being contrary to the divine command, to replenish the earth, and to the purpose of the Creator, in preserving Noah and his family, occasioned his extraordinary interposition to defeat their purpose, and to accomplish his own. As all Noah's sons were then living, and each of them the sovereign of his own family; and, as we see that each of them took his family along with him, we may reasonably conclude that to each was given a new and a different language, while Noah was left in possession of the original.

As they all, however, had been instructed by Noah, each tribe carried with them the information of the Divine will which had been communicated to him before the flood; as well as what had afterwards been communicated to him and his sons. Some traditional knowledge of the religious tenets and practice of Noah, may, therefore, be expected to be found among every people; and it is the first great object of this work to shew, that such traditional knowledge does exist, and has always existed in every nation upon earth; that the Creator has made use of extraordinary means to preserve it among them, and that, although for particular reasons, he thought fit to select the offspring of Jacob, and to make them a distinct people from the rest of the world, and to favour them with frequent revelations of his will: that he did not (as they in their self-conceit imagined, and we by adopting their prejudices are apt to suppose) withdraw his paternal care and regard from the rest of the world, or leave them a prey to the evil spirits, whose temptations he permits, without affording them the means of resisting them, or sufficient information to convince them, that it is his will, and consequently their duty to do so. For, if we are convinced of this, we shall be the more ready to part with our pharasaical

contempt for those we call unenlightened nations, and by considering them as fellow-subjects with ourselves, of the one common sovereign, we shall feel an interest in their welfare, and extend to them that portion of our regard, which we have hitherto confined to such as we have deemed related to us by country or sect. Thus, the persuasion of the universality of the Theocracy will lead to the propagation of universal philanthropy.

I do not intend to follow the descendants of Noah to the different parts of the world into which they emigrated; their progress has been so accurately traced, and their title, to be the progenitors of all the nations upon the earth so fully ascertained by others, particularly by the late Dr. Robertson, that I shall only add some corroborating proofs of the fact, and then select from the best accounts I have been able to collect of their religion and polity, such particulars as may serve to shew that they derived both from the same original*.

* The journal of the famous traveller Ledyard, has in it something so very extraordinary, that I shall here give an extract of it, dated at Cairo, in the year 1788.

“ I have seen,” says he, “ an Abyssinian woman and a Bengal man; the colour is the same in both, so are their fea-

But before we quit the plains of Affyria, it will be proper to consider what were the notions of the Deity, which Noah and his sons may be supposed to have conceived, and what were the duties which they must have held themselves bound to perform to him and to their fellow-creatures, enlightened as they now were by traditional and actual revelation. Here it is proper to observe, what I have not found taken notice of by any of our learned commentators, that

tures and person. I have seen a small mummy ; it has what I call a wampum work on it. It appears here as common as among the Tartars. Tattowing is as prevalent among the Arabs of this place, as among the South Sea Islanders. The women here are tattowed on the chin with perpendicular lines, descending from the under lip to the chin, like the women on the north-west coast of America. It is also a custom here, to stain the nails red, like the Cochin Chinese, and the Northern Tartars. The mask or veil that the women wear here, resembles exactly that worn by priests at Otaheite, and those seen at the Sandwich Islands. Among the Greek women here, I find the identical Archangel head-dress: the women dress their hair behind exactly in the same manner in which the women of the Calmuc Tartars dress theirs. Their drum is exactly like the Otaheite drum. The dogs are of just the same species found among the Otaheitians. I saw an Arab woman white, like the white Indians in the South Sea Islands, the isthmus of Darien, &c. these kind of people all look alike. I saw, in one village, exactly the same machines used for diversion, as in Russia. The small shells of the Maldivé Islands, called cowries, are equally applied by the natives of Bengal, and the inhabitants of Cashna, as a substitute for coin."

although no other children of Noah's are mentioned in the history, than Shem, Ham, and Japheth, yet as he is said to have lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood, there is no reason to suppose he might not have had many more, especially as the command to increase and multiply was given to him, as well as to his three sons; (and, Dr. Pocock says, the Arabs contended he had a fourth son after the flood, called Atlas) and, as his own residence after the dispersion is not said to have been with any of those three sons, there is ground to suppose he resided among his younger children and their descendants; and, if I may be allowed to hazard a conjecture in what country they settled, I would say it was in Hindostan, and that the Hindoes are those descendants; for, besides the many cogent reasons for the antiquity of these people, in support of their claim to priority as a nation, to be found in that most valuable collection of Sir Wm. Jones, the Asiatic researches; there is one which weighs still more forcibly with me in favour of the conjecture I have hazarded, which is, their abstinence from animal food; for, when we consider, that Noah is said to have been six hundred years old when he entered the ark, and had lived all his life upon vegetable food, as there was no permission to eat flesh, we cannot suppose he had any desire to avail

himself of the permission given him to eat flesh after the flood; but, on the contrary, that he abhorred it while he lived. And although his three sons who were born before the flood, the eldest of whom is said to have been ninety-eight years old, might have reconciled themselves to the eating flesh after they had left their father; his younger children, with whom he dwelt and exercised his patriarchal authority, would most probably be influenced by his example. The smallness of their stock of animals would be also a good reason for their abstaining from eating their flesh: for it may easily be supposed, that the three elder sons carried with them the largest share of what had been produced by those which came out of the ark.

But, not to pursue the grounds of this conjecture any further at present, let us return to the consideration of the religious state of mankind at the time of the dispersion; and of this we may collect a pretty good account from the seven precepts of Noah, given us in the Jewish Talmud; for, by comparing them with the Mosaic history, we shall find they either correspond with, or are deducible from it.

The first of these seven precepts is against

what they call strange worship, that is false worship, or the worship of false gods. The second enjoins [the blessing the name of God; by which is to be understood, worship and adoration. The third forbids shedding innocent blood. The fourth, the defiling themselves with filthy lusts. The fifth, the taking away any thing by violence. The sixth, the treating with indecorum the judicial or sovereign authority; or, as St. Paul quotes it, the speaking evil of the rulers of the people. The seventh, the pulling a limb from a living creature, and eating it. The five first of these precepts are almost literally re-enacted in the Decalogue; and the sixth is fully comprehended in the fifth commandment, as the parental authority was the only jurisdiction which could have existed in the time of Noah, or at least before the dispersion of his descendants. The seventh precept was the consequence of the permission to eat the flesh of animals, which we find was first given to Noah after his quitting the ark; and, from whence we are to conclude, as well as from the appointment of fruit for the sustenance of Adam and Eve, that the antediluvians did not eat flesh. The same prohibition was repeated by the divine command under the Mosaic dispensation, though not contained in the Decalogue. So that, as we find the whole adopted under that dispensation, we have good

reason to consider these precepts as the positive ordinances, under which the earth was to be again replenished with inhabitants and governed, until a further code should be promulgated by divine authority. For, it is a highly presumptive proof of the divine origin of any institution, that it is conformable to the prior and subsequent revelations of the divine will; since, as the Deity does not need the instruction of experience to render his ordinances perfect, they must ever be consistent with each other: and, though promulgated at different periods, and adapted to the then existing circumstances of men, they must all be considered as the several links of the same chain, and be in perfect union with each other. For nothing is more true than Dr. Lord's observation, that there never was, nor ever can be, but two religions in the world, viz. the religion of God, and the religion of the Devil. The former is comprised in that beautiful hymn of the angels, glory and adoration to God, as the Creator of all things, and peace and good-will amongst men, as brethren and fellow-creatures, and servants of the same Creator and Sovereign. The other may likewise be comprised in opposite sentences, viz. the giving to the creatures the honor due to the Creator, and the exciting and promoting discord and enmity among men.

The sacrifice which Noah immediately offered upon quitting the ark, was probably of the young which had been produced in it; as well to testify his acknowledgment of the Creator's right to whatever comes into the world, as his own gratitude for his deliverance. The permission which was then given him to eat flesh, and the promise made to him that the earth should not again be covered with water, shew plainly, that the communications of the divine will were continued by celestial ministers; and, when the dispersion afterwards took place, as the descendants of each of the sons followed their progenitor, we have no reason to suppose that these communications were discontinued to any of them, although we have so few instances of it recorded, except in the case of Abraham, a descendant of Shem; for we have no sacred history of any of the other tribes, or even of that of Shem, except of that single family taken up after seven generations.

The communications with Isaac and Jacob are like those to Abraham; sometimes in dreams and visions, and upon other occasions, by celestial messengers in human shape. The Lord is said to have appeared to Isaac in the land of the Philistines, at Gerah, and again at Beersheba, where he built an altar, and called on the name of the Lord. Jacob also in a dream saw the Lord stand-

ing above the ladder, which reached from the earth to heaven, and the angels ascending and descending upon it ; and he then says, that the God of his father had been with him ; but in the affair of the streaked cattle, he says, God had shewed it to him in a dream ; and that the angel of God spake to him in a dream, desiring him to quit Laban, and that he told him he was the same that had appeared to him above the ladder. Laban also says, that God came to him in a dream and told him not to injure Jacob ; and Jacob saw in a vision a host of angels encouraging him to go on to meet Esau, who he heard was coming with a great company. The wrestling circumstance is so extraordinary an occurrence, that not knowing what to make of it, I shall pass it over ; more especially as the name of Israel, which it is there said was given to Jacob in addition to his own, by the man or angel who wrestled with him, we find to have been given to him afterwards, when God is said to have appeared to him at Bethel, the place where he had seen the vision of the ladder when he came out of Padan-Aram, and renewed to him the promise made to Abraham, of giving him the possessions of the Canaanites.

The communications by personified ministers seem now to have ceased, and dreams or nightly

visions only were the means used for the purpose ; for we find Joseph informed of his future destiny by dreams ; and when Jacob doubted about going down to Egypt upon Joseph's invitation, God encouraged him to do so by a vision in the night. Nor were these sorts of communications confined to the line of Shem, for Pharaoh's butler and baker had their dreams of their future destiny, and Pharaoh himself was forewarned of the seven years of plenty and the seven years of scarceness, which were to succeed them, by a dream. There was, however, this difference, that the dreams or visions of the descendants of Shem were plain and direct to the purpose, and to be understood by the person who was favoured with them ; whereas, to the others they were allegorical, and required to be interpreted in order to be understood. We shall do well to keep this distinction in mind throughout our investigation, as it appears to be a much more respectful way of accounting for the various oracles and divinations we find throughout the world, than the imputing them to the permitted agency of the devil, which is, to suppose the Deity to permit the devil to exercise that supernatural power of prophecy, or the foretelling future events, which is the greatest evidence men are capable of receiving of a divine revelation, in order to mislead or deceive them.

As there is a chasm of upwards of two hundred years, in the history of Jacob's family, from their going into Egypt until Moses was sent to bring them out; this is a proper time to suspend our enquiry respecting them, and the result clearly appears, from what we know of their history, to be, that they had adhered throughout to the religious worship and civil polity inculcated *by the seven precepts of Noah.*

Of Japhet's descendants we have but a very short account in Genesis ; but as other ancient histories and modern discoveries have traced them from Persia, over Tartary, to America on the east, and over Asia Minor, Hungary, and the rest of Europe to the west ; we shall enquire how far the several modes of religion, and civil polity of all those nations, have been found to correspond with, or to be deducible from the precepts of Noah. Plutarch says, in his Tract against Celotes, "Examine the face of the globe, you may find cities unfortified, unlettered, without a regular magistrate, or appropriated habitations ; without possessions, property, or the use of money, and unskilled in all the magnificent and polite arts of life. But a city without the knowledge of a God, or the practice of religion ; without the use of vows, oaths, oracles, and

sacrifices to procure good, or of deprecatory rites to avert evil, no man can, or will find."

In the Asiatic researches we are told, that by Brahme, which signifies the great one, the Hindoos mean, the supreme, eternal, uncreated God; and by Brahma, the first created being, by whom he made and governs the world, and who is the prince of beneficent spirits. That he is assisted by Vichnou, the great preserver of men: that Mahasoor, the great malignant spirit, who seduced the rebellious Deutahs, is pursued by them; and, that they dart upon him the fiery darts of divine vengeance; and Dr. Maurice gives us from the Geeta, the following address of Crisnu, or the supreme Being to Arjun. "I am the Creator of all things, and all things proceed from me. I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things. I am time; I am all grasping death; and I am the resurrection. I am the mystic figure OM. I am generation and dissolution;" and he says the name OM or Aum, is never pronounced by a pious Hindoo.

In the letters from the missionaries of the society of Jesus at Madura, to the bishop of Avran-ches, they tell him, that the natives acknowledge an infinite, eternal, and infinitely perfect God, whom they call Para-benomaften. According

to their doctrine, this God created three other gods, Bruma to make the world, Vichnou to preserve it, and Routren to destroy it. Bruma created the first man out of the mud of the new earth, and placed in the Choream a delicious garden, which affords all sorts of fruits in great plenty, and where there is a tree, the fruit whereof could bestow immortality, if one could eat of it. Some gods of the second order, who were not originally mortal, had recourse to that fruit in order to acquire immortality, and deceived the vigilance of Chein, a famous serpent, who kept the tree. Chein being vexed at it, vomited a poison which was to destroy all mankind; but the god Chiven took pity on human nature, appeared in the form of a man, and swallowed all the venom with which the malicious serpent had infected the world. In process of time, Routren undertook to destroy all the world by a universal deluge. Vichnou, not being able to prevent so great an evil, diverted part of it, and saved in a ship his confident Sattiavonti, and eight hundred and forty millions of souls, and seeds of different sorts of things.

They also write, that the Malabonians worship but one divine Being, which they acknowledge to be the origin and cause of all other things; calling it accordingly Barabara Wastu, or the

supreme Being of all. This god, say they, does not concern himself with things of little moment, but has created some other great gods as his vicegerents, by whom all the worlds, and creatures contained in them, are moved and influenced. These gods, have again their subordinate gods, every one of which is said to have his particular station and care of things assigned to him. Men are created by these inferior gods according to the orders of the supreme Being, and therefore they think it reasonable that they should have some sort of worship allotted to them. They add, that all these sorts of inferior worship, are resolved at last into the sublimest worship due to the one supreme Being. They pretend that wise men among them perform their worship without images, which are only designed for children and ignorant people, who do not know how to form to themselves a right notion of those heavenly Beings. They reckon three million, and three hundred thousand gods depending upon the supreme One, and forty-eight thousand Richi or great prophets, and an infinite number of angels and other inferior officers.

Dr. Hyde says, that the ancient Persians affirmed, there were two mighty predominant principles in nature; the first they denominated Ormusd or Ormasdes, the superior and benevolent Being;

the second they stiled Ahriman, or the inferior and malignant being. Mithra in the oracles of Zoroaster, is called the second mind, and was probably the middle and the mediatorial character. They adored the sun as the image in the visible universe of the supreme presiding principle. Dr. Hyde also says, it is generally believed the Guebres worship fire; when they are desired to explain their doctrine about this point, they say, that fire is the light, and that the light is God. They have generally a strong persuasion of the existence of God, and a lively sense of providence, and of another life. They express a great resignation in their misfortunes; they profess to love every body, looking upon all men as the offspring of a common father, and are particularly humane and hospitable to strangers. They never fight together, their anger goes no farther than hard words; although their passion be ever so violent, they never blaspheme the name of God. Herodotus says, the Persians had no statues of their gods, because they did not believe, as the Greeks, that the gods had human natures, or were dead men deified.

Plutarch tells us, "that in Thebais or Upper Egypt, they owned no mortal being to be a god; but worshipped their god Cnept, whom they asserted to be without beginning and without end."

And Alexander, in his letter to his mother, writes, “that the public worship was for the vulgar, but the secret called mystery, for the learned”. Celsus says to Origin, “That just as you believe eternal punishments, so do the ministers of the sacred rites, and those who initiate into, and preside in the mysteries;” and Microbius affirms, “that even to his time, the philosophers avoided all fabulous umbrages, when they spoke of the supreme God, and saith generally of heathen antiquity, that it made no image of the supreme Being.” Mr. Petit de la Croix tells us of Genghizkhan, that in the diet which he held at Peking, when he had conquered China, he published a law, which may be supposed to declare the religion of the Tartars, Moguls, and Chinese, as he was then the sovereign of all three: ordering it to be believed, “that there is but one God, maker of heaven and earth; the only author of life and death, riches and poverty; who grants and refuses whatever he pleases, and has an absolute power over all things.” From other writers it appears, that the king or Chou-King, as the canonical books are called, every where confirm the idea of a supreme Being, the Creator and preserver of all things. They mention him under the names of Tien or Heaven; Chang-Tien or supreme heaven; Chang-Ti or supreme Lord; and Hoang-Chang-Ti, sovereign or supreme Lord.

“ This supreme Being,” say these books, “ is the principle of every thing that exists, and the father of all living ; he is eternal, immoveable, and independent : his power knows no bounds ; his sight equally comprehends the past, the present, and the future. Heaven and earth are under his government ; he is just, holy, and impartial.”

Duhalde, and later writers inform us, that Pekin contains two principal temples, the Tein-tan, and the Ti-tan, both dedicated to the Chang-Ti, but under two different titles ; in the one he is adored as the eternal Spirit, in the other as the Spirit that created and preserves the world. The emperor alone, in quality of father, and head of the great family of the nation, has a right to offer up sacrifice to the Chang-Ti : it is in the name of the people that he prays and sacrifices ; and, after the emperor, the grandees, and all who are to assist at this important ceremony, who have prepared themselves by retirement, fasting, and continence. On the day appointed, the emperor appears with all the pomp and magnificence of power ; and his march towards the Tien resembles a real triumph. The vessels in the temple, and all the utensils employed in sacrificing are of gold, and cannot be used for any other purpose. But notwithstanding this grandeur, the emperor never appears more humbled and dejected, than

when he is sacrificeing ; and by the manner of his prostrations, rolling himself in the dust, and speaking of himself to the Chang-Ti, he plainly declares, that he assumes so much pomp and splendour, only for the purpose of marking in the most sensible and striking manner, the infinite distance between the supreme Creator and the creature. The following are the inscriptions of the emperor Kanghi, for the Jesuits' church at Pekin. " To the principal of all things ; he had no beginning, and he will have no end ; he created all things in the beginning ; he alone governs, and is the true Lord of all ; his goodness and justice are infinite ; he enlightens, supports, and regulates all things with supreme authority, and with sovereign justice." By the Chin or Ching, they mean good spirits, and the souls of just men : they pray to the Chang-Ti, but practise respectful ceremonies in honour of their ancestors.

Mr. Edwards, in his excellent History of the West-Indies, speaking of the religion of the African negroes, says, " the Coromantyn negroes believe, that Accompong, the god of the heavens, is the Creator of all things, a deity of infinite goodness ; to whom, however, they never offer sacrifices, thinking it sufficient to adore him with praises and thanksgiving. Aparic is the god of

the earth, to him they offer the first fruits of the ground, and pour out libations of the liquors they drink to his honour. Ipboa is the god of the sea: if the arrival of ships which trade upon their coast is delayed, they sacrifice an hog to deprecate the wrath of Ipboa. Obboneg is a malicious deity, who pervades heaven, earth, and sea; he is the author of all evil, and when his displeasure is signified by the infliction of pestilential disorders or otherwise, nothing will divert his anger but human sacrifices, which are selected from captives taken in war; or if there be none present, then from their slaves. Besides the above deities, every family has a peculiar tutelar saint, who is supposed to have been originally a human being like one of themselves."

Among all the savages of America, the infinite and eternal Creator is acknowledged as the great spirit or master of breath. I remember an old Creek Indian, beginning his speech at a conference with declaring, that what he was going to say ought to be believed, for he was very old, and had not long to live, and his spirit must then go to meet the great spirit, who knew all things. And the royal commentaries of Peru inform us, that the founders of that empire were Mango Capac, and his wife, and sister Coga Mama, who proclaimed themselves the son and daughter of the

sun, sent from their father to reduce mankind from their savage and bestial life, to one of order and society. That the Inca being asked whether he acknowledged any other deity superior to the sun, answered, “I do not esteem the sun to be the supreme God, but his minister only, who being carried round the earth, doth perform his will and pleasure.”

It is unnecessary to add more instances of the universality of the belief in a supreme Being, the Creator and preserver of the universe; for those I have given must incline us to agree with Symmachus, that it is but reasonable to suppose that it is one and the same Being whom all mankind adore. “For, says he, we behold the same stars, we live under the same influence of one common heaven, we are encompassed by the same universe. What matters it what device each man uses in his search after the truth? one road is plainly too narrow to lead us into the initiation of so grand a mystery.”

The belief of inferior deities and their consequent worship, seems to be equally universal with that of the supreme Creator: and, as Cumberland observes, “the heathen nations plead, in excuse for their practice, that the honour given to his inferior ministers of state in the govern-

ment of the world would be taken by him as redounding to the honour of their sovereign; and that they might and would intercede with him in behalf of their worshippers." And, indeed, the generality of this secondary worship seems to have been derived from the same source, viz. the original personified communications to Adam and Noah, and his descendants, of which I have already given many instances.

Whatever other motives might have incited the descendants of Noah to build a tower, the preserving a memorial of the deluge, and the antediluvian world, are highly probable to have been among them. For we find the erection of a pillar, or the setting up a stone, were the first modes of recording the remembrance of any transaction. From representing things and times in that manner, a transition to the making such representations of persons, was easy and natural; and, in order to distinguish one kind of memorials from the other, characters were necessary to be engraved, denoting the particular purpose on the one hand, and the resemblance of the human figure would be given to mark the other. Thus hieroglyphics and statues came into use; from statues of stone, images of wood naturally followed; and, as those who wished to preserve memorials of their benefac-

tors or ancestors, would endeavour to give their images a resemblance of them, and to perpetuate their virtues or services, such insignia as denoted either would be added to their figure. The images which our translators have called gods, and which Rachael stole from her father Laban, were probably nothing more than the images of his forefathers, Noah, Shem, or perhaps of Terah, the common ancestor of both her and Jacob, and of Bethuel, their grandfather. For, as the title Elohim had been given to great men before the flood, and continued to them afterwards, as in Exodus, chap. xxii. ver. 28. "thou shalt not revile the Elohim, (translated gods) or curse the ruler of thy people"; so would their images or statues be honoured with the same appellation. Thus it was natural for the daughters of Laban to be desirous to carry with them some memorials of their own family; since, under the circumstances in which they quitted their father, it was not likely they should ever again be considered as belonging to him. These memorials or representatives of departed men, being held in such honour by the higher classes, would soon lead the vulgar to consider them as something more than mere memorials; and, as the Egyptians, by embalming the bodies of the deceased, gave a still greater identity to their memorials, and as it became necessary to construct receptacles for them,

and to enclose them in cases or closets for their preservation, it is not to be wondered, that they became objects of worship.

This, Heroditus tells us, was the case, as he says the Egyptians were the first who erected statues, and built altars and temples to their gods, who, Alexander says, in his letter to his mother, already quoted, “were all dead men.” Diodorus Siculus says, “It was the universal custom of the ancients to make gods and prophets of their first kings and law-givers ; that they did so, not only to beget veneration to their laws, but likewise to establish the opinion of the superintendency of the gods over human affairs.” “The Egyptians, (Warburton asserts) added to their figures of men, that of the animal, which signified his quality. The head of a dog, hawk, or ram, to denote fidelity, vigilance, or strength ; the feet or thighs of a goat, agility or lust ; which gave being to their Anubes-Pan, or Jupiter Ammon. And their animal worship thus arose out of their hieroglyphic representations.” Sanconiatho says, “that in the most ancient hieroglyphic writing, a supreme governor was designed, by a man with four wings ; and his lieutenants or princes under him, with two ; and that their being out stretched, signified action or design.” We are also told from the Commentary of Eusebius upon that

author, "That the Egyptians gave wings and eyes to their gods. Cronus had four eyes, two behind closed, and two before; and on his shoulders four wings, two outstretched, and two contracted, to denote that he watched while he slept, and that when flying he remained stationary. He had also two wings on his head, to denote the two principles of the mind, reason and passion." Bernier, who was a faithful narrator, gives us the following account of a conversation he had with some of the principal pundits at Benares. "Nous avons veritablement, me disent-ils, dans nos temples, quantité de statues diverses, comme celle de Bawry et Mahaden, Gernich et Gavawe qui sont des principaux et des plus parfaits deutas, et même de quantité d'autres de moindre perfection, aux qu'elles nous rendons beaucoup d'honneur. Nous nous prosternons devant elles et leur presentons des fleurs de ris, des huiles de senteur, du saffran et autres choses semblables avec beaucoup de ceremonie; néanmoins nous ne croyons point que ces statues soient, ou Brahma, même, ou Bechon lui même, et ainsi des autres, mais seulement leurs images et representations, et nous ne leur rendons ces honneurs qu'a cause de ce qu'elles representent, elles sont dans nos deutas à fin qu'il y ait quelque chose devant les yeux qui arrête L'Esprit et

quand nous prions, ce n'est pas la statue que nous prions, mais celui qui est représenté par la statue. Au reste nous reconnoissons que c'est Dieu qui est le maître absolu et le seul tout puissant.

Sir Isaac Newton, in his Chronology of the Greeks says, " Idolatry began in Chaldea and Egypt; the countries upon the Tigris and the Nile being exceeding fertile were first frequented by mankind, grew first into kingdoms, and therefore they first began to adore their dead kings and queens. Every city set up the worship of its own founder and kings; and, by alliances and conquests they spread the worship. At length the Egyptians and Phœnicians brought into Europe the practice of deifying the dead." Diodorus says, " It was the policy of the kings, that each city and country should have a deity of their own, to prevent them from entering into a general conspiracy; that none, however, disturbed another;" and Themistilius says, " The great lord and governor of the earth seems to be delighted with these diversities of religions, and that it is his will that the Syrians worship him one way, the Greeks another, and the Egyptians another." But Cicero gives a better reason for this variety, when he says, " that it may be easily understood why most cities prosecuted the memory of their vali-

ant men with divine honours, for it was to spur up their citizens to virtue, and that they might encounter dangers with the greater cheerfulness in the service of their country ; and, that for this very cause Erectheus and his daughters were received at Athens into the number of their gods."

The Chinese missionaries, in their justification for allowing the Christian converts to continue their ceremony in honour of Confucius, assert, " That they had consulted the literati and the emperor himself, and that all of them answered unanimously, that their way of honouring Confucius and their ancestors, was only designed to express their gratitude to them, and to raise in the minds of their children a due respect for their parents and tutors."

I have been the larger upon this head in order to account for the seemingly general practice of idolatry among the ancients and most enlightened nations, and it appears that even the Israelites were not exempt from it while in Egypt, by their requiring Aaron to make them a resemblance of the Egyptian symbol, Apis, to go before them ; since Moses who they had relied upon as the divine minister had left them ; and from the investigation we have made, it appears that neither the

other nations or the Israelites worshipped that image as the Deity; for we find that when Aaron built the altar before the calf, he proclaimed a feast unto the Lord.

The reverence and worship of the dead, naturally led to the belief of a future state, in which the soul continued to exist after its separation from the body; and, as the acknowledgment of a providence must have been the result of the belief of a supreme and subordinate deities, the departed soul was supposed to be rewarded or punished in that state according to its deserts, while it remained enclosed in the body. The belief of the immortality of the soul, (which Herodotus says was first taught in Egypt) and of the justice of the Deity, gave rise to the doctrine of the Metempsychosis. The Egyptians, Warburton says, believed the Metempsychosis as the act of the Deity; but Pythagoras taught it to the Greeks as a natural necessity; the soul passing from the destroyed body into another to continue its existence. Plato says, that “those changes and transitions were the purgations of impure minds, unfit, by reason of the pollutions they had contracted, to reascend the place from whence they came, and rejoin that substance from whence they were discerped; and, consequently, that pure and immaculate souls were

exempt from this transmigration." Plutarch, in his *Consolations to Appolonius*, declares, "It was so ancient an opinion that good men should be recompenced after death, that he could not reach to the author or original of it." Seneca says, "When we weigh the question of the immortality of the soul, the consent of all mankind in their fears and hopes of a future state, is of no small moment." Warburton tells us, "The ancients who allowed the immortality of the soul, asserted its pre-existence, that it was eternal *a parte ante*, as well as *a parte post*; or, as the Latins expressed it by the word *sempiternus*, without beginning; and they supposed that which had no beginning might have no end; for, that if it was generated, it might be corrupted. Its being from eternity, made it a part of God; that it was discerped from the substance of God in time, and would in time be resolved into it again." In all these evidences of the ancient belief of the immortality of the soul, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, we do not find the least hint of the resurrection of the body: nor is there any ground for supposing that the Antediluvians, or the descendants of Shem, in the time of Jacob, had any such notion. Indeed, it should seem that the Pharisees only among the Jews, down to the time of our Saviour, believed it; for we are expressly told, that the Sadducees denied not only

the resurrection, but that there were angels or spirits; and the questions put to Christ by some of his disciples, implied their belief of the transmigration, when they asked him respecting the man born blind; “Which did sin, this man or his parents?” And from the rulers saying to another, who had also been born blind, that “He was altogether born in sin,” they appear to have entertained the same opinion. The truth is, reason or experience could not discover the possibility of a resurrection of the bodies of men, though they might lead them to suppose the soul continued to exist after the dissolution of the body, and to persuade them, that it then enjoyed reward or suffered punishment. The manner in which that was done must have been mere conjecture, and therefore liable to various suppositions, and of all others that of its transmigration into other bodies appears the most reasonable; for, as the bodies of all animals, as well as men, are evidently animated by souls, and their different qualities and dispositions so nearly resembling those of men, it would be natural to suppose, that their souls either came out of, or went into the bodies of men, and that such bodily receptacles were suited to the soul’s disposition or anterior merit. By this supposition a great difficulty, which must always have occurred, because it still occurs, was got over; which is, the nature of the

souls of animals, and what became of them when the body perished. Solomon, indeed, tells us, they go into the earth; but he does not give us the authority upon which he asserts it.

I have now, I trust, sufficiently proved, that the belief and consequent adoration of a Creator, and a persuasion of his providence and government of the world, and of a future retribution of rewards and punishments, have been transmitted to the descendants of Ham and Japheth as well as of Shem; and, that in some instances recorded by Moses, they have been preserved to those of Ham by supernatural communications; as in the case of one of the Pharoah's, in regard to Sarah, Abraham's wife; and in the case of another Pharoah, respecting the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine. It is true, we have no such records respecting the descendants of Japheth, except in the case of two of the kings of Babylon, but as we know of nothing he did to incur the divine displeasure, and as we find the descendants of Ham, who had incurred a curse for his impiety to his father, were so favoured; we have no reason to suppose they were destitute of them. And other historians attest they had oracles and prophets, but whose predictions we think fit to attribute to the inspirations of the devil; but I confess I never could discover a good reason for

supposing that the Pharoahs of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belsazzar should be favoured with communications from the Deity ; and that Socrates and Plato, Zoroaster and Confucius had theirs from the devil. How far the augurs and oracles of other nations corresponded with the breast-plate of Aaron, it is difficult to surmise ; but Moses himself assures us, that the magicians actually converted their rods into serpents, turned the waters into blood, and made frogs, though they afterwards gave up the contest ; and, that Balaam used enchantments to discover the divine will, and that it was really communicated to him. Besides, it is generally allowed, that the oracles of all other nations ceased at the coming of Christ, as prophecy did among the Jews ; which shews they had both the same origin, and were given for similar purposes, viz. to preserve among men the knowledge of the omniscient Being, the Creator and governor of the universe, and supreme disposer of all events. For had the devil been the author of oracles, he would probably have encreased and enlarged their powers, instead of silencing them upon that event ; as he must have found greater occasion for their supernatural performances, to combat the predictions and miracles of Christ and his apostles.

I shall add to the preceding authentic proofs,

in support of my position, the extract of a Report of the Board of Trade, respecting the Obeah of the Africans, published by Mr. Edwards, as it contains some very curious information to the same purpose: "The term Obea or Obeah or Obœh (for it is variously written, say their lordships) we conceive to be the adjective, and Obe or Obi, the noun substantive, and that by the words Obia-men or women, those who practise Obi. The origin of the term we should consider as of no importance in our answer to the questions proposed, if, in search of it we were not led to disquisitions that are highly gratifying to curiosity. From the learned Mr. Bryant's Commentary, on the word Oph, we obtain a very probable etymology of the term; a serpent in the Egyptian language was called Aubor Ob. Obion is still the Egyptian name for a serpent. Moses, in the name of God, forbids the Israelites ever to enquire of the demon Ob, which, in our Bible, is translated Charmer, or Wizard, Divinator, or Sorcilegus. The woman at Endor is called Ouber Ob, translated Pythonissa; and Ou Haios (he cites from Horus Apollo) was the name of the basilisk or royal serpent, the emblem of the sun and an ancient deity of Africa. This derivation, which applies to one particular sect, the remains, probably, of a very celebrated

religious order in remote ages, is now become in Jamaica the general term for those Africans, who, in that island, practise witchcraft or sorcery.

There is another resemblance in the mode, by which the acknowledgement and worship of the Creator was universally preserved; his anger sought to be appeased; and gratitude for his favors expressed by all nations: which we are told was practised by Noah immediately after the flood, and that was by sacrifices or offerings.

That the other precepts of Noah which relate to the conduct of men towards each other, have been, and are still universally observed by the most uninformed nations, is pretty generally allowed; but there is one instance in which all unenlightened people are said to violate the precepts of Noah, and that is, theft. But it ought to be considered, that a people who have most things in common cannot have very determinate ideas of private property; their general notion is, (and it is the dictate of reason) that whatever one man has, which another wants, he ought to share with him; and that no man ought to keep what he does not want, from those who do. What they see us part with, in exchange for their furs or deer-skins, they naturally sup-

pose we do not want, or that we have more of them than we have occasion for; and, therefore, their taking them from us, without giving any thing in exchange, or having nothing to give that we value, does not appear to them a crime. I have had much acquaintance with the indigenous inhabitants of America, and I always found them reason in the manner I have stated; we ought not, therefore, in our transactions with them, to enforce the observance of our laws of *meum et tuum*, with the same strictness as they are enforced among ourselves.

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PART III.

THE next great instance of the communications of the divine will, is the promulgation of what is improperly called the Laws of Moses to the Israelites before they quitted Egypt, (for the paschal supper was instituted before their departure) and afterwards in the wilderness of Sin. This law ought to be considered as consisting of three distinct parts; the ritual or typical, the ceremonial or political, and the moral or religious. The two first were local and temporary, but the other perpetual, and intended for universal observance. If this distinction had been more attended to, much of the controversy, which the Epistles of Paul and James have occasioned, might have been spared; for it is easily to be perceived, that by *works*, St. James means the ritual and ceremonial performances which were done away by the doctrine and death of Christ, and that Paul combines the moral part, which was confirmed and adopted by Christ with faith in him, to the exclusion of the ritual and ceremonial parts, which

he properly calls the works or deeds of the law, as he terms them in his Epistles to the Romans. And as that epistle contains the fullest discussion of the subject now before us, I shall give a paraphrase of it when I come down to the christian dispensation.

The Book of Exodus, manifestly composed under Moses's direction, is fully entitled to be received as an authentic record, and the communications of the divine will contained in it, are to be implicitly believed and confided in; and, as in the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses speaks in his own person as the prophet and minister of the Deity; what he says must be deemed the dictates of the Holy Spirit. The Book of Numbers ought not, I conceive, to be classed with the four preceding Books, for it is properly a supplement to Exodus and Leveticus, and appears to have been neither written by Moses, nor composed under his direction; but to have been compiled after the Israelites were settled in Palestine, from traditional accounts. It relates some of the same transactions that are recorded in Exodus, in a very different manner, both in point of time and substance; and it adds others which do not correspond with the former accounts. Much of the ceremonial part of the Mosaic dispensation was evidently calculated to

cure the Israelites of their propensity to the Egyptian idolatry. The Egyptians eat swines' flesh only, and worshipped their secondary deities under the symbols of a cow and a sheep. Moses forbid the Israelites to eat swines' flesh, and enjoined the sacrifice of neat cattle, and sheep; and, it is particularly to be observed that he sacrificed a red heifer immediately after they came out of Egypt, although, in all other cases, it is the male which is directed to be sacrificed. The Egyptians worshipped with their faces towards the east, and Moses directed the Israelites to look towards the west; he forbid either sex to put on the other's apparel, because the Egyptians worshipped Venus, the men in womens' clothes, and the women in mens'. It is then surely very extraordinary to find him making a brazen serpent, the Egyptian symbol of the supreme Being, and setting it up as an object for the Israelites to look to, for their cure of the bite of the flying serpents that infested them: and, it is equally extraordinary, that Moses, when he was recapitulating the several instances of the miraculous interpositions of the Deity in their chastisement or favour, should have omitted it altogether, as it is not to be found in the book of Deutronomy. The destruction of the Medianites, and the putting Balaam to death, are events of which Moses also says nothing; and as he had told the Israe-

lites that they were not to molest the Edomites, because they were the descendants of Esau, nor the Moabites, the descendants of Lot, who were incorporated with the Midianites; it appears strange that they should fall upon the Midianites, who committed no hostilities against them, as they were the immediate descendants of Abraham by Ketura, and as nearly related to them by the father as the Edomites were, and more nearly than the Moabites. Besides, as Balaam is said to have dwelt near the Euphrates, a detachment must have been sent thither for the purpose of putting him to death, which would have been a long march from the desert of Sin, and a service of much danger through the territories of hostile nations. But the circumstance in which the relation in this book appears the most questionable is, that of the appointment of the Sanhedrim, or council of seventy. In Exodus, Moses is stated to have adopted the measure by the advice of Jethro, and to have directed the tribes to choose the members, and it is said, that he committed the decision of the lesser matters only to them, reserving to himself the judgment of the weightier affairs, that he might consult the Lord upon them; nor does Moses say one word of the inspiration of these seventy. But the Book of Numbers makes the appointment to be by the immediate command of the Lord, and that the

Lord came down for the purpose, and took a portion of the spirit, with which he had endued Moses, and divided it among the seventy, who all instantly became prophets in consequence of it; and, upon the authority of this story future Sanhedrims assumed to be inspired, though I do not find that any of them exercised their pretended miraculous gifts while Joshua lived, or even during the continuance of the first temple. That story was, therefore, probably fabricated after the return from the Babylonish captivity, when the urim had been taken out of the high-priest's breast-plate, to enable the sanhedrim to supply the want of it.

I know it is said, that the allusion made to the brazen serpent by Christ, confirms the truth of the story; but it ought to be considered, that the quotations made of the Jewish canonical records throughout the gospels and epistles, are made to those who looked upon them as sacred writings, and does not imply that the quoter believed in them. When Jude says, that Michael contending with the devil about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but only said, "the Lord rebuke thee;" is it necessary to suppose that Jude believed the story? or, that he only quoted it to remind the Jews who did believe it; that their

own sacred writings furnished the strongest proof of the respect that ought to be paid to dignities, even though the persons who possessed them were not as good as they should be, since they were told by them, that even an archangel, and leader of the heavenly host, was not permitted to speak disrespectfully to the leader of the infernals. Nor is the mention of Job by the prophet Ezekiel, or by St. James, any proof that there ever existed such a man; nor, is St. Paul's telling Timothy, that certain men of corrupt minds, reprobates concerning the faith, resisted the truth, like as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, any proof that Paul believed there were such malevolent spirits who contended with Moses. For we may find among ourselves such sort of quotations or allusions frequently made without meaning to give credit to the story, as when a grave divine, tells us of enthusiasts going upon a Quixot expedition, or that a sensualist is only fit to live among Hoynhims, we do not suppose him to believe there was ever such a man as Don Quixot, or such a nation as the Hoynhims.

That the Israelites were selected by God for especial purposes, must be allowed; but that they were particularly *favoured* in the common acceptance of that term, by no means appears from their history. Their being in bondage to

the Egyptians for more than two hundred years, and their sojourning forty more in the wilderness, were certainly no proofs of the Creator's partiality to them ; even if they had not been visited by pestilence and many extraordinary calamities in the mean time. And when they were at last conducted into Palestine, they were not long suffered to enjoy their possessions in peace, but were harassed by frequent wars ; and, (what happened to no other people,) were several times carried away by their conquerors into distant countries.

We should, therefore, look for some other cause for their selection, than the impious one of partiality in the Creator to a particular family ; and a little attention to circumstances will shew us, that the general welfare of the human race, was the benevolent purpose.

That it is the will of the Creator, or of his divine Agent, to employ the ministry of celestial beings in the government of the world, and that their good purposes and benign influences are opposed by malevolent beings, have, I trust, been sufficiently proved from the sacred writings. And that although the worship of these celestial ministers had not been forbidden to man before the Mosaic dispensation, it appears only to have been permitted in reference to the supreme Be-

ing, whose ministers they were always to be considered. But men had forgotton the Creator in their worship of the creature, and therefore the divine Agent was graciously pleased to recal them to their duty by manifesting his superior power, through the hands of mere men, by indowing them with a power superior to that which the highest of his celestial ministers had been permitted to exercise, or the malevolent spirits had been able to withstand or controul.

The Egyptians were at this time the most enlightened people, and the most celebrated nation in the world. Their country was therefore the most fitly chosen for the purpose; and a people who were in bondage to them, were selected as the most proper to render the display of supernatural power the more striking, and less likely to be mistaken. The nature of the miracles was well calculated to make a deep impression on the minds of the Egyptians; and their extention over the whole country must have rendered them notorious among the neighbouring nations, and among all who traded with the Egyptians, or with whom they had intercourse. And we find by the Kainites and the woman of Jericho, that this was actually the case, and that the God of the Hebrews was dreaded as the God of gods, and sovereign in heaven and

in earth. Nor were the Canaanites unapprized of the Israelites' claim to the country they inhabited, and to which they were coming; for Berrington tells us, that the Phœnicians had a tradition, that they should be expelled by the Hebrews; and it is probable they solicited and incited Og and Sehon to refuse them a passage through their territories, and so involved them in their calamity. The Amalekites were still more deservedly chastised, though their extirpation was deferred, for they attacked the Israelites, who were restrained from offending them, as descendants of Esau.

It is remarkable that all the declarations made to the Israelites of giving them possession of the land of Canaan, indicates the *removal* of the present inhabitants and not their extirpation; for it is said, "I will drive them out before you, or you shall drive them out." And although most of their cities, which all appear to have been fortified, were defended, and the defenders put to death, we cannot suppose that any of the inhabitants but the garrisons remained in them, under the impressions which the miracles they had heard were wrought, for the Israelites deliverance out of Egypt; and their extraordinary passage through the red sea, must have made upon them. As the Canaanites were a commer-

cial people, and possessed several ports on the Mediterranean, many of them it must be supposed would transport themselves into distant countries in their ships, while others sought refuge among the neighbouring nations, and as they were a polished and ingenious people, and carried with them the arts and sciences they possessed, they were a great acquisition to the countries to which they emigrated; and the very near coincidence of profane history and chronology with the Mosaic account, gives good ground to suppose such was really the case, for our chronologers compute the Exod to have happened one thousand four hundred and ninety-one years before Christ; and, that Cecrops brought a colony of Saïtes from Egypt into Attica, and began the kingdom of Athens about sixty years before that time; that ten years after him, Scamander came from Crete into Phrygia and began the kingdom of Troy; and, that fifty-three years after, Scamander, at the very time of the Exod, Cadmus is said to have carried the Phœnician letters into Greece, and to have built the citadel of Thebes. As they removed with their wives and children, and in large bodies, they would settle together as colonies in foreign countries, especially where there were but few inhabitants; and would form a mode of government for themselves, practise their own religion, and become

a distinct people from the natives wherever they sat down.

To what distance their emigrations may have extended cannot be ascertained; but as we know that the Phœnicians traded to the western islands and Britain, as well as to Spain, and all parts within the Streights, we have reason to suppose some families transported themselves to all those places; and should it have happened that a ship intending to go to the Azores, fell so much to the south as to get into the trade wind, she would probably be carried to the coast of America, and proceeding up the river Oronoca or Amazon, might land her passengers so high up, that they may have become the ancestors of the Peruvians, a people who bear a much nearer resemblance to the ancient Phœnicians, than to any of the indigenous tribes that surround them.

That the defusing their arts and sciences among other nations, was an intended effect of their dispersion, may be collected from the singularity of the manner of their expulsion, as peace was to be offered to all other nations, but *they* were to be expelled at all events; and, perhaps the giving them time to transport themselves, after they knew the Israelites were delivered out of the power of the Egyptians, was one reason for

detaining that people so long in the wilderness, and for conducting them by that rout instead of the common road, which would have led them by the sea-coast, and thereby cut off the fugitives retreat by their ships. And it is worthy of remark, that Joshua in his progress avoided the sea-port towns, leaving both Tyre and Sidon in the hands of the natives, which kept open the door for their emigration by sea, even after the rest of the country was in the possession of the Israelites. If such was the purpose of the Creator, nothing could be better contrived, than the mode by which it was executed. The terror impressed by the threat of total destruction if they resisted, must have incited the weak, the aged, the young among the males, and all the females, to seek their safety by flight ; and, the most resolute of the men, who resolved to defend the country to the last, must have judged it prudent to comply with their solicitations.

It is by the emigration of such inhabitants only, that colonies are planted, and permanent establishments made ; bands of warriors unattended by women, such as were the Greek colonies attempted by Alexander, soon expire, or become melted down among the natives ; and establishments made by traders have a like fate ; but in the case of the Phœnicians every thing was pre-

pared for giving permanency to the settlements they were going to make, and as they took a final leave of their country, it is probable they left nothing behind they thought would be useful to them where they were going; and, as they could not be certain what entertainment or accommodation they might meet with, they would be careful to supply themselves abundantly with the provisions which their plentiful country afforded. Circumstances so favourable for colonization, never happened before or since.

Nor should it be thought extraordinary, that the Creator should make use of a people whose crimes brought down upon them so heavy a punishment, as the instruments of instruction to mankind, since we see the Israelites used in the same manner; for while they were given up to be carried away by the Babelonians and Assyrians, as a punishment for their idolatry, they were made the instruments of instruction to those people. And their final dispersion among all the nations of the earth, (a punishment for the greatest crime any people ever perpetrated,) is, at this day, a most powerful means of preparing all nations to receive the Christian dispensation.

It is, however, time to return from this digression, (although it is consistent with the main

purpose of this undertaking, which is, to shew the universality of the Theocracy,) and to examine the correspondence between the Mosaic dispensation and the former communications of the will of the Creator to men.

I have already said, that what is called the law of Moses ought to be divided into three parts, the typical or ritual, the ceremonial or political, and the moral or religious. The institutions of neither the first or third were entirely new, for Cain and Abel, and Noah after them, we are told, made offerings, and performed sacrifice, and the rite of circumcision had been given to Abraham, who also had performed sacrifice, as did Jethro before the law was promulgated; and the whole of the Decalogue and the other moral precepts interspersed in the Books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, are all deducible from the first communications to Adam, to Cain, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and from the seven precepts of Noah. The ceremonial or political part was adapted to the purposes for which the Israelites were selected, and settled in Palestine, a country situated in the centre of the then known world, and with which it was the most easy to have intercourse. Yet they were to be preserved a distinct and unmixed people, in order to their being the depositary of the history of God's dealings

with men, and the sacred records of the communications of the divine will, which were digested and arranged by Moses, under the immediate and public direction of the Deity.

The same intention is discoverable in the whole of these divine institutions, as I have before shewn to have been the end and purpose of all preceding supernatural communications to man, viz. glory and adoration to God on high, and on earth, peace, good will amongst men. For, although several of the ceremonial or political precepts served to debar the Israelites from any society or familiar intercourse with strangers, they were strictly enjoined to do them equal justice with their brethren. In the twenty-fourth chapter of Leviticus, they are told that “they shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger as for one of their own country;” and to enforce their obedience, the reason is added, “for I am the Lord your God.” and in the 25th chap. ver. xxxv. &c. he tells them, “that if a stranger or a sojourner be waxen poor, or fallen in decay with them, then they shall relieve him; that they shall take no usury of him, nor lend him money upon usury, nor lend him victuals for increase:” and in Deutronomy, Moses reminds them, that “they should not harden their hearts, nor shut their hands from the poor, but open

their hand wide unto the poor and to the needy in the land. That they should not wrest judgment, nor respect persons, but that which is altogether just should they follow, which would be the means of their being continued in the land which the Lord God gave them."

From the death of Moses until the appearance of the prophets, the history of the Israelites carries in it no internal evidence of the divine inspiration of the writer; nor does Moses say that Joshua would have any other communications of the divine will than had already been made, but that he was to execute all that the Lord had said through him: and we find the extraordinary appearance of a cloud over the ark was withdrawn. The passing over Jordan does not appear to have had any thing miraculous in it, as Jordan is well known to be but an inconsiderable river, and often fordable; and at the very time when the Israelites were preparing to pass it, the spies had forded it backwards and forwards. The very extraordinary orders Joshua is recorded to have given to the sun and moon, is not said to have been by the command of the Lord, as all the miracles Moses wrought, are said to be; but Joshua is made to speak as from himself, which was what Moses never did, when he was about to perform any miracle; which raises

a suspicion in my mind that Joshua's miracles deserve no better credit than most of those which are recorded in the following books, which are equally sanctioned by the Sanhedrim; but, as I have already shewn that the Sanhedrims' claim to inspiration is founded on a forgery, I do not think the authority of any should be admitted; which has not the stamp of the divinity, or has been adopted by Christ. And as the Books of Judges, of Ruth, and the Song of Solomon, appear to want those testimonies of their inspiration, I must express my concern, that they ever were admitted into the cannon of scripture.

The other historical books I shall pass over, with only observing, that however authentic the history they contain may be, there is no ground for receiving them as holy scriptures, dictated by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The scribes or writers of the public records are indeed called prophets by our translators of the Bible; but the modern critics in the Hebrew language say, the name given them signifies oratour, or one who declared in public, as the scribes did, what they had written or compiled; and when it was approved by the Sanhedrim, it was laid up among the records. These scribes seem to have had the charge of educating the youth, for we find their scholars called, the sons or the children

of the oratours or prophets, as the name is translated. Those who were really inspired prophets, when they had written a prediction, carried it to the temple, and fastened it upon the gate, where it remained some days for public inspection, which is the reason of the charge to write in a large hand, that *he that runs may read*. The paper was then taken down, and read in the Sanhedrim, and directed to be laid up among the records. As the history of public transactions, as well as the prophecies were written on single leaves, and were laid up in rolls without dates in many cases, it is no wonder several are misplaced; and, as many of the rolls were lost or destroyed when the people were carried away into captivity, the rulers upon their return were obliged to have recourse to the private copies of individuals, to supply what was deficient; and their priests and scribes would not be wanting upon such occasions, any more than our monks, to produce marvellous accounts in honour of their religion or nation*. The collection of

* In the time of the Ptolemies, the practise of forging books became general, says Warburton. The Greek philosophers forged books for Hermes Immogistus, allegorising their gods, and spiritualising their worship. To combat them, the Christians forged others, and imputed them to the same author, in which they made Hermes speak plainer of the mysteries of the Christian faith, than even the Jewish prophets themselves.

psalms, which are improperly called the psalms of David, as many of them are not of his composition, and appear to have been composed for public, as well as private use; and were sung in the service of the temple, and in the synagogues. They are divided by the Jews into five books, in which division, however, the times of their composition seem more to have been considered than the subjects or the composers; and none of them, except the prophetic, have any claim to divine inspiration. Some of them speak a language very different from the breathings of the Holy Ghost, and highly repugnant to Christian benevolence; as I shall have occasion to observe, when I come to examine the conformity of our mode of public worship; to the doctrine and practice of Christ and his apostles. In the mean time, I shall give a short historical account of them in the appendix.

Much pains has been taken to excuse or exculpate David, from the charge of cursing his enemies, in some of the psalms imputed to him; but, however abhorrent curses are to the spirit of Christianity, they were not forbidden under the Mosaic dispensation; but, on the contrary, Moses directed, that when the Israelites became possessed of the land of Canaan, they should erect a pillar on mount Ebal, and

inscribe the curses to which they were liable, and which he had pronounced against them upon it. We find in the case of Balaam, that great efficacy was attributed to such imprecations and cursings of enemies. Nor was forgiveness of injuries a precept of any religion, antecedent to the Christian, as we find all nations put their prisoners, taken in battle, to death; and, although the other petitions in the prayer Christ composed for his disciples, were in use among the Jews, that which makes the having forgiven others, the plea for expecting forgiveness ourselves, was quite new to them, and revolted the Jewish proselytes exceedingly, who had been accustomed to think retaliation agreeable to the Deity.

The prophecies which are come down to us, and are admitted into the canon of scripture, carry the evidence of their divine inspiration along with them; and the authenticity as well as the interpretation of those, in which Christians are particularly interested, have been so fully established, and so ably defended, that I shall only observe upon them; that the exhortations they give, and the denunciations they pronounce, pursue the same general purpose of inciting men to give glory to God, and to live in peace, and promote the welfare of each other. And, in some of them we may perceive a tendency

to wean the Jews from their national prejudices against other people, and to weaken their attachment to ritual performances, as preparatory to a more perfect and enlarged dispensation (which should include all mankind) to be introduced by that prophet, who Moses had told them, the Lord would raise up, a lawgiver like as he had been made to them, and whose institutions they should in like manner obey, plainly intimating that nothing of Moses' should be observed, but what he should adopt and continue. Isaiah says, Chap. xlv. "The Lord that created the heavens, that formed the earth, he created it not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited: he sayeth, Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth. The word is gone out of my mouth, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." And in the forty-ninth he saith of him, who he had formed from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to his duty, "That he would also give him to be a light to the Gentiles, that he might be salvation unto the ends of the earth." And in the fifty-sixth he declares, "That the sons of the stranger he will bring to his holy mountain, and make them joyful in his house of prayer. That their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted; for mine house, saith the Lord, shall be called the house of prayer for *all people*. Again, Chap. lxvi. "It shall come,

that I will gather *all nations and tongues*; and they shall come, and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, *to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory*; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles."

The comparative insignificancy of their ritual observances, with the practice of benevolence, is strongly marked by the reproof Isaiah gives the Jews, for assuming merit, on account of their strictness in keeping the fasts enjoined by the Levitical law, in the lviiith chapter. And Ezekiel takes away their hopes of favour, on account of the merits of their ancestors, by declaring, "That the just shall live, and the unjust shall be punished, without any retrospect to former merits or demerits;" which abrogates so much of the Mosaic dispensation, as threatens to inflict punishment upon the children for the crimes of their parents, and contrarywise to shew favour to the posterity of the righteous: and which might lead them to expect, that other nations would no longer be excluded from the Divine favour as they hitherto considered them to have been, on account of their idolatrous progenitors; or they themselves cherished, because of the piety of theirs,

If, as I have supposed, the expulsion of the Canaanites by the Israelites, was the occasion of spreading the arts, sciences, &c. among other nations, it would appear from the perfection in which we find them among the Greeks, Romans, and Carthagenians, that the Phœnicians possessed them in a high degree in their own country; and Solomon's afterwards sending to Tyre for artificers to construct the temple, may be considered as a proof that such was the case; and however they might have corrupted the traditions they derived from their ancestors, or polluted their religious adoration, it seems, that they still retained the precepts of Noah, and carried them with them upon their emigration. And how shall we account for meeting with the following evidence of the purity of the religious sentiments entertained by their descendants in the countries to which they emigrated, unless we suppose they were favoured with some supernatural communications to help them in their remembrance and direct their judgement, although perhaps not in the same degree as the descendants of Shem in the line of Abraham were assisted.

Pythagoras says, "Every man's chief end should be a resemblance to God, imitating him whom we serve." "If I had been a nightingale or a swan," says Epictetus, "I should have em-

ployed the time of my life in such a way as is fuitable to the condition of those creatures. But being made a man, capable of serving and worshipping that God from whom I had my being, it is but reason that I should apply myself to this, as being my proper work and business."

Seneca declares it to be the duty of magistrates to be careful to give public testimonies of their being religious and devout, for which he gives this double reason: "Because the people will be less subject to entertain any jealousy or suspicion of suffering injury from such who they believe to be religious; and withal, they will be less subject to attempt the doing of injury against such, as knowing that good magistrates are after a more especial manner under the Divine favour and protection, having God to fight with them and for them."

It is Plutarch's opinion, "That religion is the cement of all community, and the chief basis of all legislative power:" and Tully's, "That if we but take away the awe of religion, all that fidelity and justice, so necessary for the keeping up of human society, must perish with it." "It is this," says Juvenile, "which doth distinguish us from brute creatures: that we have souls capable of divine impressions." Varro asserts, "That

they only have a right notion of God, who conceive him to be a soul or spirit, actuating and governing all things by his power and wisdom."

Mr. Stanly, in his Lives of Socrates and Plato, gives us the following, as the declarations of their faith :

"Socrates (he says) taught, that God is one perfect in himself, giving the Being and well being of every creature: what he is, (says he) I know not, what he is not, I know. That God, not chance, made the world and all creatures, is demonstrable from the reasonable disposition of their parts, as well for use as defence; from their care to preserve themselves, and continue their species. That he particularly regards man in his body, from the excellent upright form thereof, from the gift of speech, from allowance in his soul, from the excellence thereof above others; in both, for divinations predicting dangers. That he regards particulars, from his care of the whole species; that he will reward such as please him, and punish such as displease him, from his power to do it, from the belief he has imprinted in man, that he will do it, profest by the most wise and civilized cities and ages; that he at once seeth all, from the instances of the eye, which at once over-runs many miles, and of the mind, which, at once, considereth things

done in the most distant places; finally, that he is such, and so great, as that he at once sees all, hears all, is every where, and orders all. That God takes care of all creatures, is demonstrable from the benefits he gives them of light, water, and fire, and reasonable productions of fruits of the earth. That he hath particular care of man, from the nourishment of all plants and creatures for man's service; from their subjection to man, though they exceed him never so much in strength; from the variety of man's sense, accommodated to the variety of objects for necessity, use, and pleasure. From reason, whereby he discourses, through reminiscence, from sensible objects; from speech, whereby he communicates all that he knows, gives laws and governs states. That God, notwithstanding he is invisible, hath a being, from the instances of his ministers, invisible also, as thunder and wind. From the soul of man, which hath something with the divine nature, in governing those that cannot see it. The soul is immortal, for what is always moveable is immortal; but that which moveth another, or is moved by another, hath a cessation of motion and life; the soul is præexistent. The body being compounded, is dissolved by death; the soul being simple, passeth into another life, incapable of corruption. Virtue is the beauty, vice the deformity of the soul. Our prayers should be for blessings in

general, for God knows best what is good for us; our offerings ought to be proportioned to our abilities, for he considers integrity, not munificence. The best way of worshipping, is to do what he commands. Men are the possessions of God; would you (said he) not be angry, if your slave should kill himself against your will? That the chief office of a philosopher is to meditate on death; therefore he ought not to fear the approach of it. That as death is the solution of the soul from the body, so is it the office of a philosopher to free the soul from corporeal affections. That if we understand the better, the more the soul is disengaged from sense; we shall perfectly understand when she is wholly freed from the body by death; which perfection of knowledge is the sole end of philosophy."

"Plato, (he tells us) taught, that God is first, eternal, ineffable, perfect in himself, that is needing none, and ever perfect; that he is, absolute in all times, and every way perfect; that is, absolute in every part, divinity, essence, truth, harmony, good. Neither, saith he, do we so name these to distinguish one from the other; but rather by them all to understand one. He is said to be good, because he bestoweth his benefits upon all, according to their several capacities, and so is the cause of all good. Truth, because he is the prin-

ciple of all truth, as the sun is of all light; and father, as being cause of all things. As the sun is to sight and visible things, himself not being sight, yet affording the one to see, the other to be seen; so is the first intellect to that intellect which is in our soul, and to those things which it understandeth. By this he comprehendeth God himself, through reason of that excellence which consisteth in adoration of him. From all these it followeth, that God is incorporeal; if he were a body it would follow that he must be generable, corruptible, mutable, which to affirm of God were intolerable."

It is unnecessary to multiply instances from the ancient philosophers, in support of the point I set out with the intention of proving, viz. that, the Creator had not left all the descendants of Noah, except a branch of the line of Shem, without the knowledge of the seven precepts of that patriarch; or without such supernatural communications as served to keep them in their memory. For whoever can suppose those philosophers to have been actuated and instructed by the devil, while Sampson and Solomon were inspired by God, must be as far gone in attachment to system as the Jews were, who imputed Christ's miracles to Belzebub, and believed that the Sanhedrim in pronouncing Christ's declaration, "that he

was the son of God," to be blasphemy, were actuated by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Nor is it the philosophers only who appear to have been acquainted with those precepts, or to have acted in conformity to them. For we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, that the inhabitants of Melita, the island upon which Paul was shipwrecked, whom Luke, in conformity to the arrogance of the Jews and Greeks, calls barbarians, received the wretched crew with kindness and hospitality, instead of plundering and murdering them, as some Christians would have done ; and from what he further says of them, it appears that they acknowledged a supreme Being, and subordinate deities, and believed in a Providence that punished crimes.

I have already observed, that the captivity and removal of the Jews into other countries must have had the effect of diffusing a knowledge of their religion amongst those nations ; but, as the Greeks first, and after them the Romans, had greatly improved upon the knowledge of their Phœnician ancestors ; the science of the former, and the policy of the latter, were better calculated than those of the Jewish nation, to prepare the way for a system which embraced the universe, and collected all mankind into one great family.

This system, which was to be the perfection of

all the other communications of the divine will which had been made to men, and which was to exalt them to the highest excellence of which human nature is capable, the world was now judged in a condition to receive. And as the former less perfect and less extensive communications, though suitable to the condition and circumstances of those to whom they were made, and to the times in which they were made, had been upon the same plan, and directed to the same end: they shew us the uniformity of the Theocracy throughout the whole, and point out the condition of man, to be that of a progressive being, both as a species, and as an individual; and verify the assertion of the apostle, "That the law, or the Mosaic dispensation, which included the ante and post-deluvian communications, was a schoolmaster to bring men to, or prepare them for Christ."

When the whole species consisted of only a single man and woman, whose sustenance was provided for them; to adore and to obey their Creator, seems to include the whole of their duty; and, although we have no account of what further duties were enjoined them or their progeny before the flood, we may conclude from the judgment pronounced upon Cain, and the previous declaration, that when he did well, he knew he should be accepted, and that when he did

evil, he was aware that sin would lie at his door ; and also from the flood itself being inflicted as a punishment of their offences, that the sufferers were informed of their duty, as we find it contained in the precepts of Noah. The covenant the Creator made with Noah after the flood, may be considered as a further important step in the progress I have supposed, and the new covenant with Abraham, and the right of initiation annexed to it, may likewise be considered as a further progress towards the improvement of man as a social being. The same purpose is carried on still further by the Mosaic dispensation, and is evidently intended to be completed by the Christian, so as to qualify men for the society of beings of a superior and more perfect order.

Had the Chinese missionaries considered the matter in this light, they would not have been at a loss for an answer to the emperor's question, when he asked them, " How they accounted for the Creator suffering that great empire to remain so long in ignorance of those things, which they represented as so essentially necessary for them to know ?" As they might have replied, that the Creator's communications to men were progressive, and that one communication prepared them for another, and the most perfect was the last ; or, as St, Paul told the Athenians, " That their

worshipping inferior or unknown beings, as subordinate gods, was imputed by the Creator to their ignorance and want of better information; but that now a teacher was come into the world to lead them into all truth, and to reclaim them from those errors, and that God had given assurance unto all men, that he was a teacher sent by him, by raising him from the dead.

I shall now proceed to examine the conformity of the Christian doctrine, as taught by Christ and his apostles, to the general tenor and principles, upon which I have shewn the former communications of the divine will to be founded; viz. the glory of the Creator, and the inciting and promoting good-will among men. Were I to do this to the full extent, I must transcribe the whole New Testament: I shall, therefore, only extract a few of the most striking passages out of St. Matthew's gospel, and give a paraphrastical abridgement of the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, and also that to the Romans, which contain a complete summary of the whole of the Creator's communications to man, and a perfect compendium of Christianity.

Christ says in Matthew, Chap. xxii. in answer to the question put to him, " Which is the

great commandment? Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And in the fifth chapter he says, "Blessed* are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." And Chap. xviii, to Peter's question, "How oft shall my brother offend me, and I forgive him? Till seven times?" He answered, "I say not unto thee, Till seven times; but, Till

* Blessing, as the word is used in scripture, has various significations. When God in Genesis is said to have blessed the seventh day, it means hallowing it, or speaking well of it. When Christ is said in the xxvith of Matthew, to bless the loaves, he spake of the bread, as what mankind would be benefited by receiving. When he took little children up in his arms and blessed them, he prayed to God on their behalf. Jacob blessing his sons, is also to be understood in this sense. By blessing, instruction is also to be understood, as when God is said to bless Adam. It is likewise used to express the appointing things to their use; as blessing the fish of the sea, and fowls of the air. Blessing is also meant to express a beneficent act, as when Naaman says to Elisha, "I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant." It was the custom of the Jews, at their meals, for every one to drink out of a separate cup, thrice filled, and the last was called the cup of blessing, for upon finishing the repast, the master gave thanks to God; or, as our custom was, before our gentry were corrupted by French atheism, under the name of politeness, to say grace after meals.

seventy times seven: Be ye merciful, even as your father which is in heaven is merciful, that ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven; who maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain upon the just, and on the unjust." And how beautifully are these precepts enforced by the description he gives of the manner in which rewards and punishments will be dispensed at the day of judgment, in the xxvth chapter. "To you who have fed the hungry; given drink to the thirsty; clothed the naked; lodged the stranger; visited the sick; and comforted the prisoner; I will say, Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for inasmuch as you have done those acts of benevolence to your brethren, I shall reward you for them, as if you had done them to myself."

St. Paul begins the chapters I have noticed, with telling the Corinthians, "That universal benevolence, or promoting the welfare and happiness of our fellow-creatures, is the main end and purpose of God in the distribution of his gifts among men; and, that they are only valuable or desirable, as they afford the means of doing good." He then clearly proves, that the distinctions among men of mental powers, as

well as of worldly circumstances, are made by God, for the preservation of society, which cannot subsist without such a variety, and reciprocal assistance: but, that the good of our fellow-creatures, being the end, was in every respect preferable to the means: and, that benevolence of heart was on that account to be more earnestly desired, than the most distinguishing supernatural gifts. He, however, takes care, that he should not be mistaken to mean, by the charity he so much extols, mere pecuniary donations to the poor, or even painful and laborious bodily services to them; but, that it is the inward affection of the mind, the benevolence of the heart, which Christianity excites and inculcates, that he thus celebrates and recommends. He concludes with assuring them, that it is such a disposition only, which will entitle them to everlasting happiness. For it is such a disposition alone, which can qualify them for that society, into which they will be admitted in a future state. All supernatural gifts, how great soever, will die with those who possess them, they being only intended to be exercised in this world; but faith, which is a trust in the promises of God, and in the redemption by Christ; hope of the blessed immortality, to which he has opened the gate; and a truly benevolent disposition, will accompany us into another state; and, that even after faith and

hope shall have lost their objects in fruition, benevolence will continue to be the bond of union between us and our celestial associates; as the common principle of all created beings, the fellow-servants of the same Lord and Governor, bound by the same obligations to do his will and to praise and adore him for having given them a being, with capacity to know and perform it*.

• “The metamorphoses, and the metempsychosis were both,” says Warburton, as I have already observed, “founded on the belief of a Providence and retribution; in the one by a transformation of the body, in the other by a transmigration of the soul. The soul going to the body in the latter case, and the body coming to the soul in the former. For,” he observes, “There was only one of these two ways, by which the irregularities of this state, could be reconciled with the dispensations of an all-wise and good governor of the world, by people who had no knowledge of a future state, that is, of a resurrection to life and immortality.” The doctrine of a resurrection to a life of immortality, therefore, superseded both those modes of retribution; and, in order to abolish them effectually, as well as to support the justice of the dispensation, it became necessary to inculcate the belief, that the personal identity was preserved; and, that whatever changes the body might undergo, so much of its substance would be raised and reunited with the soul, as to constitute the same man. This personal identity is asserted by Christ in his reply to the Sadducees already taken notice of, and in his description of the last judgement as recorded by Matthew; but, as the renovated body is said to be a spiritual body, inasmuch as he says it will be as that of the angels; and, St. Paul says, “It will

In his Epistle to the Roman converts, who were composed of Gentiles, as well as Jews; St. be like to Christ's after his resurrection, which was spiritualized in the tomb," it is not easy to determine from that circumstance, in what our sameness will consist, besides that of our consciousness, that we are the same person. But St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians, goes more fully into the subject, and puts the question which a believer in the metempsychosis would naturally ask; "With what body would the dead rise, supposing the soul to have inhabited several?" and which Paul answers in a way, to confute the notion of a transmigration; at the same time he maintains the personal identity, by shewing, that there is a regular succession in every species, and, that all have specific differences, which are constantly preserved, and none are ever confounded with others; but in all successions, the future production is specifically the same with the past. He also gives us reason to suppose the planets and stars are inhabited by different classes of beings, for when he speaks of the several glories of the different celestial bodies, he must mean that of their animated inhabitants, for inanimate bodies can have no glory in themselves, nor exceed one another in glory; as that implies pre-eminency, or superiority, of which inanimate bodies are incapable. Besides, the drift of his argument is to shew, that there will be different states of happiness assigned at the resurrection to the human species, and compares the glory of their several states to that of the celestials, who likewise differ in glory, according to what Christ had before said, "That in his father's house there were many mansions, all differing in degrees of glory." As, however, the body, although spiritualized, is supposed to continue a material substance to all eternity, I do not think it of importance to the belief of the soul's immortality, that it should be acknowledged to be immaterial; for, as both material and immaterial creatures, if there be any such, must

Paul begins with a precise description of his own office, as the apostle of God, concerning his son Jesus Christ, and thereby serving God through his son. From the eighteenth verse of the first chapter to the end of it, the apostle seems to speak of the antediluvian world, and of their crimes, which brought upon them the judgement of the Creator, who had furnished them with sufficient means of knowing and performing his will. After reciting their variety of wickedness which occasioned their destruction, and having thus set before the Roman converts, the

be equally created, there seems to be no difficulty in supposing the Creator to have made the one as capable of immortality as the other; but, in our reasonings upon this subject we ought to begin with defining what matter is, or what we mean by the term. If we define it to be an inert substance, we exclude thinking, and self-motion; and consequently it cannot be the soul, for it moves and thinks; but if we say with Locke, "that God may superadd to matter a power of thinking, and in our definition of matter include thinking; then matter, so endowed, may be a soul." But then this matter is no longer the matter we before defined to be an inert substance, or, more properly speaking, is no more matter, but a thing composed of matter and spirit, which is properly an animal. This manner of changing the nature of things, to suit an argument, is unfair, and is never done to discover truth; when, therefore, any assert the soul to be material, they ought to be asked, what they mean by matter? If they say an inert substance, which can neither move nor think, they then refute their own supposition, as the soul does both.

crimes and the consequent destruction of the ancient world, in which they were ready enough to acquiesce, as highly merited; he addresses himself to them, as Nathan did to David, telling them, that by their judging the ancient world to be deserving of what they suffered, they condemned themselves if they became guilty of the like offences; that those of them who had been Jews would not be screened by their profession, for that the Gentiles, who acted uprightly, would be more respected in the day of judgement; inasmuch, as it is evident, that a man may be justified by active faith, without the deeds or works of the ritual or ceremonial part of the law of Moses; from the case of Abraham, to whom the promises were made before he had performed the right of circumcision, having acquired the favour of God without the law, or having performed any of the works of ritual parts of it, but merely by his confidence in the promises of God, and his ready obedience to the divine will, as far as it had been made known to him. And by parity of reason, Christians will be justified by faith in Christ (into whose religion they are initiated by baptism) and their performance of his commands; and having reminded them of the redemption wrought for them by Christ, which was far superior to that by Moses, he argues from it; that they ought to devote themselves to his service,

especially as he proceeds to shew, that the ritual or ceremonial part of the law of Moses was abolished, under the apt similitude of a woman, whose first husband was dead, and was thereby set at liberty to give herself to another. He then shews them the great advantage and necessity of the atonement made by Christ, to redeem them from the forfeitures incurred under the ritual law, and thanks God for that redemption. But, while he exults in the beneficial consequences of it, he takes care they shall not suppose the moral part of the law was also abrogated, or offences against it rendered nugatory by that redemption; for he insists upon their fulfilling the righteousness of the law or the moral part which was adopted by Christ, and still continued of force, which consists in purity of heart, love towards God, and good-will towards men; which Christ would assist them to perform by the influence of his holy spirit, if they sincerely endeavoured it. He then consoles the Jewish converts for thus opening the pale of which they were so proud, by reminding them of the advantages they had enjoyed over the Gentile world; and laments that all the descendants of Jacob had not equally profited of them. But to furnish them with an excuse to make to themselves, he tells them it was the will of God that it should be so. He then returns to his argument of the universa-

lity of the gospel dispensation, and of its being an improvement upon, and a completion of the Mosaic, which is absorbed in it; for Christ, he says, is the end or object of the law, and the righteousness or moral part of it is adopted by the gospel, the ritual or ceremonial part only being abolished, inasmuch as the purpose of it was now fulfilled in Christ: and, therefore, the Gentile Christians should not be required to conform to that part of it. He then addresses himself to the Gentile Christians, and exhorting them to a strict observance of the precepts of the gospel, which included the moral law of the Jews, charges them not to conceive of themselves to have superceded the Jews in the especial favour of God, but to remember that they were only incorporated with them in one body as Christians, and that in case of their disobedience they had less reason to expect mercy, seeing how many of that favoured nation were cast out, because of their unworthiness*. Having thus accomplished the great purpose of his Epistle, the removing the prejudices of the Hebrews, and curbing the self-conceit of the Gentile Christians, and disposing them to assimilate into one new society, without retrospect to their former con-

* The chapters upon predestination are not taken notice of in this paraphrase, as it is conceived the subject may be considered as sufficiently explained by what has been said of man's free agency.

dition; he proceeds to exhort them to be kindly affectionate one towards another, not to offend each other by pertinacity in indifferent things, or to insist upon the laying aside old customs which had nothing criminal in them; but that those which were better informed, or possessed better judgement, ought to overlook and bear with the prejudices of the weaker brethren, and so live in unity and brotherly love. That they were all the servants of one common master, and that none should take upon them to judge or scrutinize the thoughts or hearts of others, as that belonged to God only; but, that each should purify his own heart, and regulate his own conduct by the precepts of the gospel. To be diligent in their respective callings, and to employ the talents God had given them for the good of others as well as themselves; to be humble, patient, and benevolent; forgiving injuries, and even doing good to their enemies. To be dutiful to the government they lived under, and obedient to the civil authority, not only through dread of punishment, but because it was the will of God that men should live in society, and because society could not exist without subordination; and, therefore, they ought to consider government as ordained by God, and submit to its authority for conscience sake*.

* As it is not agreed who was the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, I shall examine its title to be deemed St. Paul's;

The harmony of the four Gospels has been so fully shewn, and the general correspondence of the whole, with the universal principle I have

for as it was not known till two hundred years after Christ, and never universally received, as written by Paul, its authenticity is still open to discussion. There are several ways of discovering the author of any book, or other publication, who chooses to conceal his name, but the most common and most certain is by comparing the manner, style, and sentiments, with his other writings. First then, it appears to have been the constant practice of Paul, to address his Epistles at the beginning, and to take leave of those he had addressed at the conclusion; but in this he does neither, for although he says, "they of Italy salute you," he names none. The reason commonly given for it, is an idle one, viz. "That he did not consider himself, or was considered, as the Apostle of the Hebrews;" for, are not all his other Epistles addressed equally to the Jewish as to the Gentile converts? The following extracts from his Epistle to the Corinthians, compared with others taken from this Epistle, will shew how little correspondence there is between them, either in style or sentiment.

Hebrews,

Chap. iv. For unto *us* was the Gospel *preached* as well as unto *them* (the ancient Israelites.)

Chap. v. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, *which be the first principles of the oracles of God.*

Chap. vi. *Leaving, therefore, the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go into perfection;*

And this will we do if God permit.

been contending for, of exciting men to glorify God, and to entertain good-will to each other, is so easily to be collected, that I shall not en-

Chap. xiii. *Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly.*

II. Corinthians,

Chap. v. Now then, *we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God.*

Chap. xi. For I suppose *I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.*

I have preached to you the Gospel of God freely.

As the truth of Christ is in me, no man shall stop my boasting.

Whoever can suppose these different passages written by the same author, must have studied criticism to little purpose. The following are quoted, as well on account of their sentiment as style.

Hebrews,

Chap. vi. For it is *impossible* for those who *were once enlightened*, and have *tasted* of the heavenly gift, and were made partakes of the Holy Ghost, and have *tasted* the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if *they fall away, to renew them again to repentance.*

Chap. x. For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no

crease the size of this Treatise by unnecessary quotations from them, but as I proceed, I shall occasionally observe upon some phrases and expressions which allude to local circumstances or situations.

Although so little is said of the proceedings of any of the apostles, except Paul, in the Acts, that little is of the greatest importance to us; since it shews us, what the practice of the apostles

more sacrifice for sins, but **A CERTAIN** *fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

These extracts are so unlike the whole tenor of the gospel, that I have no hesitation in pronouncing them the dictates of a priest at the head of his little Sanhedrim of Presbyters, in the third century; for who that had heard Christ's charge to Peter, after he had thrice denied him, would have imputed such implacability to his religion? St. Paul was far from doing it, as in his 2d Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. vii. ver. 10. he tells them, *Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation.*

There are, however, many other parts of this Epistle which bear the stamp of the great apostle; and, if I might venture a conjecture upon the subject, it would be, that it was a compilation from fragments of Paul's writings or preachings, put together by some of the fathers, after the Christian churches had adopted the Jewish system, and annexed their own relentless doctrines, with what had been taught by the apostle. It is much to be lamented, that this Epistle is not purged of these profanations. See note, 44, from Warberton.

themselves was, and their own enlightened interpretation of Christ's doctrine ; for it is to them and to their immediate successors only, who were endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that we ought to look for direction in those matters. All that followed were without such gifts, and were men liable to like factions, and alike disposed to misrepresent the truth with ourselves, and therefore deserve but a very limited confidence. We have the same scriptures they had, and we are as capable of understanding their meaning as they were ; less biassed by prejudice and faction, and therefore more likely to form a candid and just opinion.

The most that we can profit by their writings, is, from the proofs they furnish of the authenticity of the gospels and epistles, which are come down to us ; and, if we lay aside their comments, we shall sustain no injury in our Christian profession ; for I will venture to say, after a pretty general acquaintance with church history, and ecclesiastical and other polemical writers, and with the decrees of councils ; that if the whole, from Origin to Chellingworth, were lost, the world would not be deprived of a single Christian maxim or virtue. I will not imitate Mr. Gibbon in traducing the whole body of the primitive Christians ; nor will I say with Lord Herbert,

“ That priests have introduced superstition and idolatry ; as well as sown quarrels and dissensions wherever they came ; ” but as Mosheim confesses, “ That the bitter dissensions and cruel animosities that reigned among the Christian sects, particularly the Greeks, Nestorians, Eutychians, and Monophysites, had filled a great part of the East with carnage, assassinations, and such detestable enormities as rendered the very name of Christianity odious to many, so early as the sixth century.” I cannot help giving credit to the reproach Julian casts upon them in the third century, as I find his letter quoted by Mr. Bryant, in which he tells the Christians, “ That they never imitated the Jews in holiness of life, but what you copy from them,” says he, “ is their fury and bitterness in overturning temples and altars, and you murder not only those of your persuasion, who follow the religion of their forefathers ; but those also, who, like yourselves, have wandered from the truth, and whom ye esteem heretics, because they do not offer the same dirges to the dead. But these are your own devices, for neither Jesus nor Paul gave you any commission to act in this manner.”

How this came to be the case, and, that the simple, pure, and benevolent doctrine of Christ and his apostles was thus corrupted and per-

verted, and the religion of God debased into the religion of the devil, so as to render the sword of Mahomet as necessary an instrument for extirpating the idolatrous and detestably corrupt professors of Christianity, as the sword of Joshua had been to exterminate the filthy worshippers of Baal-Peor; deserves a particular investigation, as it is a matter of the most serious concern to us at this day.

I shall not in this investigation take Doctor Priestly for my guide, though I am ready to acknowledge he has traced out the progress of corruptions in Christianity with great ability, and had he not committed the very crime of which he accuses others, that of concealing, and misrepresenting texts, which make against his own system, I should have thought his book a most commendable work*. But I shall draw my

* That I may not appear to have made so heavy a charge against Dr. Priestly without proof, I shall subjoin some extracts from his History of the Corruptions of Christianity, and contrast them with the opposite texts of scripture.

In page 156, Vol. I. he says, "Certainly then we ought to suspend our assent to a doctrine of this important nature, (the atonement) *which no person can pretend to deduce, except by way of inference from particular expressions, which have much the air of figure and allusion.*"

facts from a purer source, the Acts and Epistles of the apostles, and their immediate disciples.

In page 159, he says, “ If therefore the proper end of his (Christ’s) coming into the world, had been to make satisfaction to the justice of God by his death, (which certainly they who did not expect a suffering Messiah could have no idea of) he would have taken some opportunity of explaining it to them. *But nothing of this kind occurs in the whole course of his preaching, and though he frequently speaks of his death, it is never as having had such an end.*”

Again, page 160. “ Whenever our Lord speaks of the object of his mission and death, as he often does, it is either in a more general way, as for the salvation of the world, to do the will of God, to fulfil the scripture, prophecies, &c. But all *these representations are quite foreign to any thing in the doctrine of atonement.* To James and John he says, “ Ye shall indeed be baptised with my baptism, and drink of the cup which I drink of.” And he recommends his own example to them, in laying down his life for them.”

Again, page 165. “ When we find the apostles *to be absolutely silent*, where we cannot but think there was the greatest occasion to open themselves freely, concerning the doctrine of atonement, when in their most serious discourses they make use of language *that really sets it aside, when they never once directly assert the necessity of any satisfaction for sin, or the insufficiency of our good works alone, to entitle us to the favour of God and future happiness, must we build so important an article of faith on mere hints and inferences from their writings?*”

Page 172. Passing his (that is Christ’s) own life in a voluntary exclusion from all that men call great, and in obe-

I have already taken notice of the forgery, under which the Sanhedrim claimed inspiration.

dience to the will of God, calmly giving up his life in circumstances of public ignominy and torture, in the full persuasion that he should receive it again with advantage."

Before I contrast these assertions of the absolute silence of Christ and his apostles, upon the subject of the atonement, with extracts from the epistles and gospel, I shall take leave to ask Dr. Priestly, If Christ's sufferings and death were not to atone for others, why were they inflicted? If it be a degradation of the wisdom and justice of God, to punish an innocent man for the offences of others; is it not more so to punish him for no good purpose whatever? If, as he says, "Christ, in obedience to the will of God, calmly gave up his life, in circumstances of public ignominy and torture," What notion must we have of God, *willing* the most innocent man that ever lived, to do so for no end or purpose?

If he tells us, that to prove to us that we should rise again after death, it became necessary that Christ should die and rise again, his death under circumstances the most easy and pleasant, would have answered that end much better than under the ignominious circumstances with which it was attended; for might it not be supposed, that none were to rise again who did not die exactly as Christ did, and few men are crucified; whereas the multitude die in their beds, and without ignominy. The *example* therefore, of his rising after such a mode of dying, could not serve to assure the generality of mankind of their resurrection, so well as if he had died without suffering pain or ignominy; and in that case neither the goodness or justice of God would have been accused of putting an innocent man to pain and ignominy unnecessarily.

The high priest who presided in that court, had formerly also another ground for his pretension,

Let then Dr. Priestly, and the other objectors to the doctrine of the satisfaction or atonement, account upon other principles for the good, and wise, and just God, willing Christ to give up his life under circumstances of public ignominy and torture, before they deny that it was to atone for the transgressions of others, and in consequence of his own voluntary offering. But let us now hear what Christ and his apostles say of the occasion of his death and sufferings.

St. John,

Chap. x. Christ says, “ I lay down my life for the sheep,
ver. 15. therefore doth my father love me, because I

Chap. xii. lay down my life. I came not to judge the
ver. 47. world but to save the world.”

Acts,

Chap. xiii. “ Be it known unto you, therefore, men and
ver. 38, 39. brethren, that through this man (Christ) is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins ; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Romans,

Chap. iii. “ For all have sinned, and come short of the
ver. 23, 24, 25, glory of God ; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ : whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.”

Chap. v. “ For when we were yet without strength,
ver. 6, 8, 9. in due time Christ died for the ungodly

the breast-plate of Aaron, in which was the urim or oracle. But unfortunately that ornament

God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath to come."

1 Corinthians,

Chap. xv. "For I delivered unto you first of all that
ver. 3. which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."

2 Corinthians,

Chap. v. "We thus judge, that if one died for all,
ver. 14, 15. then were all dead: and that he (Christ) died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them."

Galations,

Chap. ii. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who
ver. 20, 21. loved me, and gave himself for me. If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."

Ephesians,

Chap. ii. "Ye who sometimes were far off are made
v. 13, 14, 15, 16. nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, that he might reconcile both (Jews and Gentiles) unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

had been seized by the Babylonians, and on account of the value of the precious stones of

1 Timothy,

Chap. i. “ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all
ver. 15. acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the
world to save sinners.”

Chap. ii. “ For there is one God, and one mediator
ver. 5, 6. between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;
who gave himself a ransom for all.”

1 Peter's Epistle,

Chap. i. “ Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not
ver. 18, 19. redeemed with corruptible things, as silver
and gold, but with the precious blood of
Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and
without spot.”

Chap. ii. “ Because Christ also suffered for us, who his
ver. 21, 24. own self bare our sins in his own body on the
tree, by whose stripes ye were healed.”

That the incarnation, and sufferings, and death of the Son of God was *necessary*, in order to man's redemption, or recovery to a condition of immortality, and that the Creator could not, consistent with his justice, have otherwise restored him to it, are bold assertions, and cannot be justified but upon the ground that it has been done, and therefore must have been necessary; but even upon that ground it is presumption in us to assert it's necessity for man's redemption, as we cannot know what other purposes it was likewise to effect. It is sufficient for us to be assured, that it has been; and, that our redemption has been secured thereby, without presuming to

which it was composed broken to pieces. The like misfortune had happened to the sacred oil

judge of the motives which occasioned it. The Son of God having assumed the human nature, it became necessary that he should die as man; and had his death been occasioned by disease, it might, and would have been considered as a punishment inflicted by the Creator, which would have destroyed the sufficiency of his atonement. Had it followed from old age, and a decay of nature; such a condition of imbecility in the teacher, would have destroyed the effect of his doctrine and miracles. Or had he been translated into heaven, as Enoch and Elijah were, his humanity could not have been proved. A violent death, inflicted by men, seems, therefore, to have been necessary; but why it should have been attended with such pain and ignominy, is beyond our comprehension. For a life of purity and sinless obedience in one of the sons of Adam, we might suppose to compensate for the original failure of the father, as St. Paul says, "That as by one man sin came into the world, and death by sin, so by the obedience of one man, all were made alive or restored to life. The sufferings and the ignominy, therefore, of Christ's death, we may suppose, had reference to some further purpose than man's redemption, and ought to withhold us from presuming that they were necessary on our account alone; and, if we believe the Son to be the efficient agent and actual producer of all things, we shall find abundant reason to suppose man is not the only object of his care; and however grateful we ought to be for our restoration, let us not presume to limit the effects of the adorable means employed in it to ourselves only, and daringly pronounce upon its necessity on our account alone. There is or can be nothing necessary to the divine Being: his will alone, as I have already observed, makes the reason and the fitness of all things. The course of nature, as it is

with which Aaron had been anointed. The high-priests, therefore, of the second temple, had neither the urim and thumim, nor were they anointed by the holy oil, and on that account they are not

idly called, is nothing more than his appointment. The fitness of things is nothing more than their suitability to that reason which he has given us. We ought, therefore, to lay aside all presumptuous judgements of the Creator. It is our duty to adore his Being, and to obey his will as far as we can know it; and, therefore, the first great object of all our enquiries, and for the exercise of all the faculties he has given us, ought to be the discovery of that will. In regard to the miraculous conception of Christ, there is nothing can be added to the present most excellent and learned bishop of Rochester, Dr. Horsley's Sermon upon the Nativity: but there is one light, in which the arguments of the unbelievers in Matthew's account, have not been placed by any writer that I have met with, which is the consequences which must follow from *their* supposition that the account is false. All agree, that Christ was a virtuous and good man, that he was a teacher of righteousness, and was assisted by a supernatural power. Now, we know, that from the time he began his ministry, he never recognized Joseph as his father, but on the contrary, declared he had another father, in doing which, if Joseph was his father, he was not only guilty of impiety, but falsehood, two crimes fully sufficient to contaminate his morality, and to render him, instead of an example of purity, a detestable hypocrite, and not very likely to be sanctioned by a supernatural power. But, on the other hand, if it be supposed, that although he was not the Son of Joseph, and so far free from the charge of want of filial duty and falsehood, Whose son was he? If the son of some other man, then was he the offspring of an adulterer and an adultress, and the Creator is charged with

called *Unctus Jehova*, but *vir multarum vestium*, because they had five ornamental habits. The council of seventy, or rather of seventy-two, (for that was the number) sat in a half moon; they had another president besides the high-priest for ordinary occasions, who was called Pater Consistory; but the high-priest was called, when he presided, Princeps. There were in all the provinces lesser Sanhedrims, but that at Jerusalem only judged prophets and pronounced capital sentences. Hence that saying of Christ, "that it was not possible a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem."

This constitution was so well suited to the maintenance of spiritual dominion, that the Christian teachers immediately adopted it, and every congregation had its presbyters and bishop whom they elected, and formed the same sort of court, calling themselves a church, and assumed a spiritual authority over the consciences of their flock, inflicting censures, penances, and excommunications, or delivering over to satan at their pleasure; for they were not content with the

selecting a man so born to be a teacher of purity, which is too monstrous to be imagined. The question, therefore, which Christ asked the Pharisees ought always to be asked the oppugners of the miraculous conception; "What think ye of Christ, whose son is he?"

keys of the kingdom of heaven, which were all that Peter was promised; but they borrowed those of the bottomless pit also, from the angel, who, St. John says, had them in charge. Having thus assumed the Jewish plan, they went on to make the like distinction in their places of worship, which had been marked out in the temple.

That edifice had consisted of three divisions. The outward was called the court of the people, in which we are told the publican made his prayer, standing afar off; the next was called the sanctum, into which the priests went, and the penitents were introduced, when they were pardoned, by a narrow gate; to which our Saviour alludes, when he desires his disciples "to seek to enter in at the strait gate." The inner was the sanctum sanctorum, which was divided from the sanctum by the pillars Jachen and Boaz, whence the apostles, and after them the bishops, were called the pillars, as standing between the inferior clergy, or presbyters, and the Deity. These churches were not composed of large districts or numerous congregations; but whenever there was a bishop and presbyters sufficient to make one; and Cyprian says, "that three presbyters and a bishop are sufficient for the purpose." Here then was a wide foundation laid

for priestly pride and tyranny, and for the incitement and gratification of every malevolent disposition of the human heart, to the utter suppression of Christian humility, piety, and benevolence. We find in the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and Colossians, the apostle complains of the divisions and factions among them, and of the severity with which some of these churches even then exercised their self-created authority, in imitation of what the apostles themselves had done at Jerusalem, to settle the controversy between the Jewish and Gentile converts. These churches afterwards formed councils, in which they assumed all the powers and authority of the superior Jewish Sanhedrim, and, as in some cases, one council decreed against another; they, by their divisions, counteracted the general purpose of Christianity, of forming one people of the whole inhabitants of the earth. While the apostles lived, the mischief of this adoption of the Jewish into the Christian system did not fully appear; but as, upon their death, there was no superior authority, every church asserted its own supremacy, and framed regulations and expounded scriptures in the manner which best suited its own situation or purpose; and upon any general subject, such as thought the same way, connected together, and anathematised those who differed from them; and

it is astonishing with what virulence these impious fraternities, who called themselves Christian Churches, persecuted each other upon the most trifling subjects.

Polycarp pleaded, that St. John observed Easter at one time; and Avicities, that St. Peter observed it at another, “and each pursued his controversy, says Hoadly, with ungoverned zeal, to the great scandal of Christianity.” Victor, bishop of Rome, excommunicated the Asiatic bishops for following John*.

* The authority claimed and exercised by these presbyters or little Sanhedrims, over the people, will appear from the condition of such as incurred their displeasure, as described by the fathers themselves.

St. Ignatius says, “whoever set up conventicles, were not legally assembled, according to the command; and whosoever officiated without the bishops, sacrificed to the devil; all you of the church of Smyrna, (says he) obey your bishops, as Jesus Christ did the Father, and the presbytery, as the apostles.”

Cyprian says of a schismatic, “that he had no longer God for his father, nor the church for his mother, but was out of the number of the faithful, and though he should die for the faith, yet should he never be saved.”

And it was a maxim of St. Austin, “that those who do not believe in Christ cannot be looked upon as lawful possessors of the things of this world;” and Beza says, “that here-

There were not, however, wanting good and pious men, who endeavoured to heal these divisions, and restore peace among Christians. Clemens Romanus, an author, (says the same learned bishop) ancients than some of the writings of the

ticks are infinitely more wicked than sacriligious men or paricides, and more deserving of punishment."

Tertullian describes the manner of the proceeding against delinquents thus: "when other parts of the divine worship were ended, then (says he) followed exhortations, reproofs, and a divine censure, for the judgement is given with great weight, as amongst those who are sure, that God beholds what they do; and this is one of the highest preludiums and forerunners of the judgement to come, when the delinquent is banished from the communion of prayers, assemblies, and all holy commerce." And Cyprian writes, "that the proud and obstinate were killed with the spiritual sword, whilst they are cast out of the church." And Origin says, "he that is condemned and bound by the church on earth, remains bound, none in heaven unloosing him." But although none in heaven could unloose these miserable objects of ecclesiastical condemnation, (or, as our translators would have called it, damnation) yet the presbytery in their great mercy, reserved the power to themselves of abolishing it, when they had undergone the legal and full time of satisfaction, and in what that satisfaction consisted, may be collected from the letter of the clergy of the church of Rome to Cyprian, and from Cyprian's book *De lapsis*; a modest petition, a bashful supplication, a necessary humility, and an industrious patience; their grief expressed by their tears, and their sorrow and shame for their crimes, by their groans. The day past in weeping, the night in watching, and crying, both night and day, in tears prostrating themselves upon the

New Testament, gives this advice to the Corinthians, amongst whom schism and contention was come to a great height ; “ Is there any amongst you of a truly generous, and charitable spirit, thoroughly moved with a desire of healing this quarrel, let him say thus : if these heats and contentions are on my account, I am ready to depart and be gone, or to do any thing, in order to heal them, that the rest of my brethren shall think fit to order ; only let the flock of

ground, rolling in dust and ashes.” And Tertullian describes one of these penitents as lying in sackcloth and ashes ; having a squalled body, and a dejected soul, fasting, praying, weeping, groaning, and roaring, night and day, throwing himself at the feet of the clergy, and kneeling before the faithful, begging and desiring their prayers and pardon. This was representing the Christian dispensation, instead of being an easy yoke, as Christ calls it, compared with the Mosaic, as infinitely more austere ; for Isaiah tells the Jews “ to put away the evil of their doings, to cease to do evil, and to learn to do well ; and that, although their sins were as scarlet, they should be as white as snow ; though they were red as crimson, they should be as wool.” And again, speaking in the name of the Lord, he says, “ I have blotted out as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins return to me, for I have redeemed thee.” And again, “ for thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also, that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite one ; for I will not contend for ever, neither will be always wrath.”

Christ, together with the presbyters set over it, live in peace." The good man, however, seems to have mistook the proper means of restoring peace ; for, instead of advising the individual about whom the contest was, to withdraw, that the presbyters might live in peace ; he should have advised the abolition of the presbyters and their Sanhedrim, and to leave all men to worship God in the way he had himself appointed. For, as bishop Wilkins observes, " It seems to be a principle of nature, to which all nations have consented, that God himself should prescribe the way of his own worship ; for, (continues the learned prelate) adoration or worship, and affiance or confidence arise out of a knowledge of the divine will, and consist in such a submissive frame of spirit, whereby a man doth always devote and resign himself unto the disposal of his Maker ; which is what no human ordinance can effect. The truth is, the end and purpose of Christ's coming into the world, seems never to have been fully understood, or his religion fully practised by any of the churches, which were founded even by the apostles themselves ; and I might venture to go farther, and assert, that it is only in the Protestant countries, and since the reformation, that just conceptions have been entertained of its excellence and purity."

This will appear more evident, from the following extracts of the canons and decrees of councils at different periods:

The council of Nice, anno 325, decreed anathemas against all who should say, "the Son of God was not, before he was begotten." It ordained also, "that prayers should be made in all churches on all Sundays, standing."

The eleventh canon of the council of Laodicea, anno 370, directs "that priestesses should not be ordained in the churches;" the thirteenth, "that the choice of a bishop should not be wholly left to the people;" the twenty-fifth, "forbids the deacons to set in the presence of a priest, without his leave:" the forty-fourth, "that women ought not to come near the altar."

The sixth canon of the council of Carthage, anno 397, forbids the giving the eucharist to the dead. In the fourth council, the fourteenth canon says, "the bishop's household stuff should be of little worth, his table and diet mean, and that he ought to acquire authority by his faith and merit, and not by external pomp." The sixty-ninth makes a bishop liable to be deprived of the power of ordination, who shall ordain a widow or a woman divorced. The one hundred

and second declares “that it is the fault of the bishop, or the curate of the parish, if the widows and nuns are forced, through necessity, to have too much familiarity with the inferior ministers.”

The second canon of the council of Chalcedon, in the fifth century, enjoins, “that if any bishop ordain for money, or sells the gifts of the spirit, which are invaluable, he shall be deposed.” The second council of Arles, canon the third, says, “a person in holy orders, above a deacon, ought not to cohabit with any other woman besides his grand-mother, his daughter, his neice, or wife; he ought not to get any woman into his chamber, whether bond or free.” The twentieth canon of the council of Agatha, declares, “that the clergy who suffer their hair to grow, shall be shaved, even against their will, by the order of the archdeacon.” The twentieth canon of the council of Orleans, forbids a monk to make use of his handkerchief in his ministry.

In the cursory review I have made of the different modes of religious worship, which have been practised throughout the world in different ages, before the coming of Christ; there have not been found any who were real idolaters, that is, who professed to worship mere human creatures, or images, as such. How shocking is it then to find such idolatry prevail among professors of

Christianity ; and, are we to wonder that such a practice should draw down upon the teachers of that people the same vengeance of a Being, who calls himself a jealous God, which we find was poured out upon nations less enlightened, and not more superstitious ? Let it not then be imputed to me as a breach of that charity or universal benevolence, which it is the professed purpose of this undertaking, to recommend and enforce, that I address the remaining sheets to the especial consideration of those ecclesiastics of the Romish church, who have sought and happily found an asylum, in this Protestant country, from the persecution of their formerly bigotted disciples. They have here an opportunity of seeing our modes of worship, of reading our religious books, and of judging by their own experience of the effect of our opinions, upon our lives and conversation. Let them divest themselves of their prejudices, and open their minds to conviction, and so profit by the visitation of Providence, that if it should be the divine will to restore them to their friends and their country, they may carry back with them such improvements in Christian knowledge and Christian charity, as may enable them to dispel the darkness of superstition, confute the sophisms of pretenders to philosophy, and establish religion upon the clear evidence of divine revelation, and the solid basis

of universal benevolence. I respect and revere the principle of the illiterate Romanists, which induces them to submit their judgements to those of superior mental endowments, who possess better means of information, and in whose integrity they have the strongest confidence. What those tell them God has said, they implicitly believe he has spoken, and considering the words as coming from God, they dare not allow themselves to question their veracity, or weigh their propriety by the fallible standard of their own reason or experience; and I am free to own, I would rather take my chance for salvation with one, who upon such principles adored a wafer, believing it to contain the body of Christ, than with the self-sufficient philosopher, who stands an argument with his Maker, and contends for a demonstration of the consistency of his Revelations, with what his reason dictates, to be the eternal rule of right, and unalterable fitness of things. But as this submission of their own judgements, to what they believe to be the declarations of the Creator, extenuates the idolatry of the ignorant and illiterate herd of Romanists; it highly aggravates the guilt of their learned and well-informed pastors, in abusing their confidence, and misguiding their adoration, under the wretched pretence, that ignorance is the mother of devotion, and that sensible objects of

worship are necessary to keep the vulgar in awe; or silence their scruples with the impious maxim of Tertullian, *credibile est quia ineptum est, certum est quia impossibile.*

I have shewn, that the chief cause of the corruption of Christianity in the earliest ages, was the adoption of the Jewish ecclesiastical constitution; but the priests did not continue to borrow from the Jews only, for they presently introduced the Pagan rites likewise. Both Jews and Pagans respected the sepulchres of their departed friends and benefactors, made feasts in honour of them, and set meat upon their tombs. This the Christians did also, and used to assemble at the tombs of their martyrs, and offer up their prayers to God to be endowed with like virtue; this Julian reproaches them with doing, when he says, “If Christ told you, that sepulchres were full of uncleanness, why do you choose those places to offer up your prayers to God.” It was not, however, long before they offered up prayers to the departed martyrs themselves, and thus incorporated the Pagan system of subordinate deities or intercessors with the supreme Being.

Although that indisputable evidence of supernatural power, the gift of tongues, had been withheld from all but such as the apostles themselves

had ordained, the power of working miracles was attributed not only to eminent persons while they lived, but to their bones and garments after their decease. It is no wonder that Mary came in for a place in this Christian mythology, and that she who had never been distinguished for any quality but meekness on earth, should be now exalted to the high but impious dignity of queen of heaven*. The multiplicity of objects

* There is no instance of Mary being considered by the apostles, otherways than as a pious woman, throughout the scripture, nor by Christ himself after he had assumed his ministry. At the marriage-feast, which is the only time we read of her being with Christ after his baptism by John, when he had been recognised as the Son of God, there is no mention of the attention paid to her as the queen of heaven: we hear nothing of calling out for the queen of heaven's cloak at the marriage feast; or, that her divine majesty's sandals were wanted when she was about to go home; nor when she came to speak with Jesus, and the disciples told him "she stood without, wanting to speak with him," he commanded no way to be made for the queen of heaven. Her relation to Christ, as his mother, had nothing in it respecting his divinity. Her womb was made the seat or inclosure, within which a body was formed, of which the Son of God became the living soul; how much of the substance of the virgin was taken to form that body we cannot know, as we cannot discover how other bodies are formed; but, as there was no man in this case, we must admit, that whatever human substance was in the composition of the embryo was of the virgin, as otherways Christ could not have been said to have taken our flesh, and as his body, when formed, was wholly nourished by the vir-

of worship gave occasion for a variety of services, and as none of the canonized saints vouchsafed to

gin's body, and was, after birth, suckled by her also, her relation to Christ, as man, was as near as that between any other mother and her son, and that relation appears to have continued, and to have been strictly regarded by Christ, until he took upon him his ministry, and was declared to be the Son of God by the voice from heaven. From thenceforth he considered his human or natural relation as dissolved, as we may understand from his expression, "That they that did the will of his father were his only relations, his mother, and sister, and brother." The claim, therefore, of Mary to divine honors as the mother of the Son of God, was fully set aside by that declaration, and we accordingly find no more mention of her being with Christ till the time of his crucifixion, when he recommended her to John, to take care of, and treat her as his own mother, and recommended it to her, to consider John as her son. It is also to be remembered, that when one of his female hearers, filled with admiration of his doctrine, cried out, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps thou hast sucked," which was certainly an allusion highly honorable to Mary; Christ, instead of applauding the woman who uttered it, reprehended her, by saying, "Yea, rather blessed is every one who heareth the word and doeth it." It having been granted on all hands, that Mary lived always a virgin, *ante partum in partu and post partum*. Some of her partizans to avoid the consequences of Christ's birth, the natural way, as destructive of her virginity, contended he did not come out of the virgin's womb, *per virginalis januam vulvæ sed menstricose de secreto ventris incerto tramite*. Others, that although he came out of the virgin's womb, that he came out *per vulvam clausam*, as he came after his resurrection into the place where his disciples were met, through the door, and not through the wall, yet without opening the door.

perform miracles but through the interposition of priests, *their* ministry became the more necessary, and was held in the higher reverence. But, as these services were only voluntary, and might be omitted without danger, the priests devised a more sure hold upon the consciences of their flock, and a more certain support to their own authority over them, by confining the administration of baptism, and the supper in commemoration of Christ's death to their order, and enjoining the frequent participation in the latter, under the pains of eternal damnation. Thus by rendering the participation absolutely necessary, and making themselves the judges who should be admitted thereto, they completely enslaved the laity. So early as the time of Cyprian, who flourished in the third century; upon a contest between Cornelius and Novatian for the see of Rome, the latter, when he administered the eucharist, and divided and gave to each man his part, with his two hands he held those of the receiver, saying to him, "Swear unto me, by the body and blood of the Lord Christ Jesus, that thou wilt never leave my party to return to that of Cornelius:" forcing the miserable receiver, instead of saying "Amen," to say, "I will not return to Cornelius." This is the first instance I have met with, of a sacramental test, and the use to which it was applied does not serve to recommend the

application to secular purposes. The higher the reverence in which this ordinance was held, the greater was the influence and authority of the priests who had the power of dispensing it; and hence they converted the bread and wine, which were used in commemoration of Christ's body and blood, broken and shed upon the cross, into the very body and blood which they were appointed to commemorate.

The absurdity of this doctrine has been frequently exposed; but as it is still maintained in its full extent, at least in practice, by the church of Rome, and not a little countenanced by the church of England, I shall, in the Appendix, examine its foundation in scripture, more critically than any ecclesiastic of either church has ever ventured to do; for I do not mean to be understood as holding up the doctrine and practice of the reformed churches, as perfectly conformable to the religion which Christ and his apostles taught; for, on the contrary, I am free to confess, there are many things in the doctrine of even our own national church, which cannot abide that test; and which, I trust, will one day be expunged. But, as the present is not a fit time for entering upon such a business, I shall refrain from animadverting upon any point of either doctrine or practice, which we continue to hold in common with the Romanists. The truth

is, the doctrine of the Romish church is less to be blamed, than the practice of its teachers and professors; whereas, the doctrine of our church, as contained in the articles and canons, is happily corrected by the general practice, both of its ministers and their congregations.

I have said above, that such had been the corruptions introduced into Christianity in the first ages, as to render the sword of Mahomet a necessary correction; but I will now go farther, and declare it as my free opinion, that we owe much of the simplicity of our present mode of religious worship, and of the advances we have made, towards that universal benevolence inculcated by Christ and his apostles; to the reformation introduced by Mahomet, into the mode of addressing the Deity, and to the philanthropy of the twelve precepts of the Coran; as we find them reduced to that number by Elmacinus.

First, To believe in one God.

Second, To love and adore him.

Third, To despise and renounce the worship of idols.

Fourth, To observe circumcision.

Fifth, To keep strictly the fast of the month Ramadan.

Sixth, To pray or repeat the tala five times in the compass of a natural day

Seventh, To be careful to pay tythes.

Eighth, Every one who is able, is to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca, once in his life.

Ninth, That they believe the prophets and apostles and all the books that were written by them.

Tenth, That Christ, the son of Mary, is the Son of God, his word and his apostle.

Eleventh, That they acknowledge the law and the gospel.

Twelfth, That they do to another, just as they would have done to themselves.

The morality of the Coran is thus summed up : whatever things are given you they are the provision of this present life, but the reward which is with God, is better and more durable for those who believe and put their trust in the Lord ; and who avoid heinous and filthy crimes ; and when they are angry, forgive. Who hearken unto their Lord, and are constant at prayer ; and who give alms out of what is bestowed upon them, not only to those who are of kin, for that is their due, but also to the poor and the stranger ; which is better for those who seek the face of God, and of whose substance a due and certain portion is ready to be given unto him who asketh, and to him who is forbidden by shame to ask. Who acquit themselves faithfully of their trust,

and justly perform their covenant ; and whoſo beareth injuries patiently, and forgiveth, which is verily a neceſſary work. I will only add what Warburton ſays of them ; “ That they are the only enthuſiaſts who tolerate all other religions ; and, that although we call them Mahomedans, as implying that they are the worſhippers of Mahomet, they pay him no kind of adoration, nor ever addreſs any prayer to him.” We ſhould, therefore, diſtinguiſh them by the name they gave themſelves, that of Muſſulmen, or believers in the one only God ; and, ſo far from looking upon them and their religion with abhorrence, we ſhould treat them with kindneſs, and ſay of them, as we have reaſon to think Jeſus Chriſt would have ſaid of them, if he had read this account, “ Verily, they are not far from the kingdom of God ;” but let us compare this ſtatement of the Muſſulman religion, with what we find is the practice in countries which call themſelves Chriſtian, and we ſhall perceive a much nearer reſemblance to the ſimplicity of the goſpel in the one, than in the other.

Mr. Townſhend in his excellent Account of his Travels through Spain, gives the following relation of what he ſaw at Barcelona :

“ In this journey I made the greater ſpeed, in order to ſpend the holy weeks at Barcelona, and

I have no reason to repent the pains I took to be present at their solemnities."

"No citizens, perhaps, bestow so much expence, and no magistrates can pay more attention, than the citizens and magistrates of Barcelona, in the processions of the holy week."

"On Wednesday, the 12th of April, I arrived, and the next morning early I visited the churches, to see the preparations they had made for the entertainment of the evening, in which they were to represent the last sufferings of the Redeemer."

"In every church I found two images, as large as life, distinguished from the rest as being stationary, and *the more immediate objects of their devotion*; the one representing Christ as taken from the cross; the other, the Virgin in all her best attire, pierced by seven swords, and leaning over the recumbent body of her son; behind these images, a theatre with colonades supporting a multitude of wax tapers, dazzled the sight, whilst the ear was charmed by the harmonious chaunting of the choir."

"More than a hundred thousand persons all the morning crowded the streets, hurrying from church to church, to express the fervor of their

devotion, by bowing themselves in each, and *kissing the feet of the most revered image*. Most of the spectators were natives of the city; but many, upon such occasions, resort to Barcelona from the adjacent villages, and some from distant provinces."

"Towards the close of the day, the pageant appeared, moving with slow and solemn pace along the streets, and conducted with the most perfect regularity. The last supper of Christ with his disciples; the treachery of Judas, attended by the priests, together with the guards; the flagellation, the crucifixion, the taking from the cross, the anointing of the body, and the burial, with every transaction of the closing scene, and the events subsequent to the passion of our Lord; were represented by images, large as life, placed in proper order on lofty stages; many of which were elegant, and all as highly ornamented, as carving and gilding, rich silks, brocades, and velvets, with curious embroidery, all executed by their most skilful artists, could render them. No expence was spared, either in the materials, the workmanship, or the wax lights, which, with the most splendid profusion, were consumed on this occasion. Each of these stages was supported on the shoulders of six men, who were completely

hid by a covering of black velvet hanging round the margin of the stage, and reaching nearly to the ground. This procession was preceded by Roman centurions, clothed in their proper armour, and the soldiers of the garrison brought up the rear. The intermediate space was occupied by the groupes of images above described, attended by eight hundred burgeses clothed in black buckram, with flowing trains, each carrying a flambeau in his hand. Besides these, one hundred and fourscore penitents engaged my more particular attention: like the former, they carried each a flambeau, but their dress was singular, somewhat resembling that of the blue-coat boys of Christ's hospital in London, being a jacket and coat in one, reaching to their heels, made of dark brown shalloon, with a bonnet on their head, like what is called a foolscap, being a cone covering the head and face completely, and having holes for the eyes. The design of this peculiar form, is to conceal the penitents, and to spare their blushes. These were followed by twenty others, who, either from remorse of conscience, or having been guilty of more atrocious crimes, or for hire, or with the most benevolent intention of adding to the common fund of merit for the service of the church, walked in the procession bare footed, dragging heavy chains, and bearing large crosses on their shoulders:

their penance was severe, but for their comfort, they had assigned to them the post of honour; for immediately after them followed the sacred corpse, placed in a glass coffin, and attended by twenty-five priests, dressed in their richest robes; near the body a well chosen band with hautboys, clarinets, french-horns, and flutes, played the softest and most solemn music."

"The day following, before eight in the morning, another procession of the same kind, but more elegant than the former, was conducted through the streets; and, in the evening a third, at which assisted all the nobles of Barcelona, each attended by two servants, and in rotation, carrying a crucifix, large as the life, and so heavy, that no one, for any length of time, could sustain the weight of it. The stages and the images were not the same which had been exhibited the preceding day, but represented all the same events. Every stage was completely occupied by images large as life, and surrounded by a border of open carved work superbly gilt, and the bearers, as in former instances, were hidden by curtains of black velvet, richly embroidered. Two hundred penitents in grey, attended as before. In each of these processions were many children, some not more than three years old, carrying little crosses, with each a flambeau in his hand: these are

used in all processions, even in the middle of the day."

After Easter they have one upon a smaller scale; about seventy priests, each with a lighted flambeau in his hand, preceded by a herald, with his banner, carrying the host, under a canopy of crimson velvet, to those who had not been well enough to receive it in the churches."

To this most extraordinary instance of the gross superstition of the Spanish Romanists, I shall only add what Lady Mary Montague tells us of the pictures she saw in the churches in Italy. "In St. Augustine's was a representation of the coronation of the Virgin, by God the Father, as an old man, and Christ as his son. One of the Trinity; in the St. Manadilla Vittoria, the Father as an old man with a beard, and the son with a pigeon on his head. In St. Thomaso, God the Father, as an old man with a long beard, with Christ dead in his bosom. In the Trinita de Pellegrine, the Trinity, at Christ's crucifixion, the Father, as an old man standing, supporting Christ on the cross, and the pigeon on his head." Nor is it in the churches only, where such representations are to be seen; for I remember, to have lodged at an inn at Cologne,

that had the Holy Ghost for its sign *. Gracious God! That any of thy intelligent creatures, to whom thou hast made thyself known by the re-

* As the Father is an infinite and incomprehensible spirit, and the Holy Ghost a spirit also, it is absurd and impious to personify either, nor is there any instance of either assuming a body. The appearances of cloven fiery tongues sitting upon the apostles, on the day of pentecost, and of a glorious illumination descending slowly from heaven, upon Christ at his baptism, were no personifications of the Holy Ghost, but only sensible testimonies of inspiration from him; for, if he is supposed to have been the cloven tongue that sat upon each apostle, then there must be eleven Holy Ghosts, as there was one upon each at the same time, which sufficiently confutes the supposition. And, in regard to the other instance, St. Matthew says, “Jesus saw the spirit of God *descending like a dove* and lighting upon him.” St. Mark says, “Jesus saw the heavens opened, and the spirit *like a dove descending* upon him.” St. Luke, “that the heavens was opened, and the Holy Ghost *descended in a bodily shape like a dove* upon him.” St. John tells us, “that John the baptist bare record, saying, I saw the spirit *descending from heaven like a dove*, and it abode upon him, and that the same who sent him to baptise, said to him, upon whom thou shalt see the *spirit descending* and remaining on him, the same is he which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.” Now, in none of these descriptions is it asserted, that the Holy Ghost assumed the person or body of a dove, but only that the luminous sensible appearance descended from heaven in the manner of a dove, which is well known to be solemn and gentle, giving time for the observation of the spectators; (which was the great purpose of the appearance as well as of the voice which accompanied it) and not in the violent or

velations of thyself, recorded in the Old and New Testament, as an infinite eternal, and incomprehensible Spirit, should thus represent thee ! But what will not early habits and attachment to system do with the human mind ? When we see men of great talents, enlightened by science, and of excellent judgement, in all other matters ; persuade themselves, that the infinite, omnipotent, eternal, and incomprehensible Being may be kneaded up in a little flour and water, and sold out in wafers at three halfpence a dozen ; and that when they take up one of those wafers, they actually hold the infinite, omnipotent, eternal, and incomprehensible Being, between their finger and thumb !

Having now come down to the present times, I shall pursue my enquiries no farther until a more convenient season, when, if God shall spare my life and health, I shall resume them, in order to examine our own system of civil polity and
 swift manner of a bird of prey darting upon its adversary or victim ; for as the spirit is not the object of sight, some appearance was necessary to ascertain the fact of the divine inspiration to the spectators, and especially to the Baptist, to whom that mark was pointed out, as distinguishing Christ from all others, who came to his baptism. There would, therefore, be as much propriety in placing a split sheep's tongue, as a pigeon on the head or hand of Christ, for the emblem of the Holy Ghost. But all such representations are impious.

religious worship, by that criterion which I have shewn to be the end and purpose of all the divine communications to man. And I shall conclude this treatise with expressing my hopes that, as in the present state of society, the motives of the actions of individuals, as well as the actions themselves, are in a great measure incited and regulated by the legal institutions of the government under which we reside, all who are concerned in the framing those institutions, will think it their especial duty to see they are founded upon and correspond, with what we find to be the universal principles of the Theocracy, viz. The giving glory to God on high, and the promoting on earth peace and good will amongst men.

APPENDIX, N^o. I.

HISTORICAL OBSERVATIONS

UPON THE

*P S A L M S.**

THE first is a psalm of instruction, and appears to have been composed by David when he was settled in peace upon the throne, after Saul's death.

The second psalm is purely prophetic, and is supposed to have been written by Nathan, at a time when a powerful confederacy was formed against David; but although it served for the encouragement of the Jews at that time to resist their enemies, by the promises it held out of great prosperity under David and his son, yet, as was

* The reader will be pleased to observe, that the corrections proposed, of certain words or phrases, in the translation of the psalms, are not the writer's own, but taken from various authors.

frequently the case, the expressions, uttered by the prophet, are of a nature to extend to a far more important object, and to describe the advent of the Messiah, and the glory of his kingdom; and so this psalm has been understood by the Jews, and is so applied by the apostles, Acts, chap. xlv. ver. 25, 26. Hebrews, chap. i. ver. 5. and the following verses.

The third, fourth, and fifth, are said to have been composed by David when he fled from Absalom, and were afterwards upon his return sung in the tabernacle.

The sixth appears to have been composed when David laboured under some grievous disease.

The seventh, called the reproof of falsehood, was composed in commemoration of some calumnies against him.

The eighth is a hymn of praise, supposed to have been composed when he was among the Philistines at Gath, as it is addressed to be sung to a harp used by the people of Gath.

The ninth is a commemoration of a deliverance from enemies. The seventeenth verse is

obscure in all versions. The word translated *hell*, ought to be *the grave*.

It is not known by whom, or at what time the tenth was composed.

The eleventh was composed by David when he was advised by some of his friends to fly to the mountainous country, when Saul became jealous. It is in dialogue. In the first verse David speaks ; in the second and third his friend ; the fourth David and to the end. *The portion of their cup* is a metaphorical expression, taken from the custom at entertainments in those days, when every guest had a cup to himself, filled with a certain quantity of wine.

In the twelfth, David complains of the small number of good men ; and it was probably composed when he fled from Absalom. In the fifth verse he comforts himself, by speaking in the person of the Lord, saying, “ he would arise for the oppression of the poor, and set him in safety.” Here, however, he gives notice of his personifying the Lord, by the words, *saith the Lord*, which ought to be always introduced upon such occasions. The last verse is not very intelligible in our Bible translation, *the wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are ex-*

alted. But, as it follows a declaration of God's protection of the righteous, and deliverance of the poor, who are often termed vile in the sacred writings ; the meaning of it may be collected to be, that the wicked should be so abashed and confounded, at seeing those they thought the meanest of men, and whom they despised and triumphed over, exalted, that when they met them, they would avoid them, by turning out of the way. But the Common Prayer Book translation gives the verse quite another turn, and one still more unintelligible, by saying, " The ungodly walk on every side, as if in triumph, and that when *they* are exalted, the children of men are put to rebuke."

The thirteenth psalm was composed by David when he was under some grievous affliction; but yet he had not lost hope of deliverance.

The fourteenth is not composed by David, but was written by some pious Jew, during one of their captivities, as the seventh verse clearly expresses it to be. The *children of men* there mentioned, therefore, refers to the Chaldeans, who were all idolaters, among whom the writer then was.

The fifteenth is a very instructive psalm.

The sixteenth is a psalm of triumph, and it is called the golden psalm of David : but the two last verses are the most remarkable ; as they have been quoted by the apostles Peter and John, as prophetic of Christ's resurrection.

The seventeenth is called a prayer of David, for deliverance from the false accusations he then laboured under, probably of treason against Saul. There are some remarkable differences in the two translations of the last verse. The Bible says, " As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness ; " which evidently refers to the symbols of the divine presence in the sanctuary ; but the Prayer Book alters the expression and makes it nonsense, by saying, " when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it. "

The eighteenth is a psalm of thanksgiving for a great victory and deliverance from the hand of his enemies, and from Saul. What he says of the divine interposition, seems referable to what in the fifth chapter of Samuel it is said happened in a battle he had with the Philistines.

The nineteenth psalm is a hymn of praise.

The twentieth, if composed by David, was given to the tabernacle, to be used as a prayer for his good success when he went against his enemies, who were probably the Amorites and Syrians, from the mention of their chariots and horsemen.

The twenty-first is a thanksgiving for his success.

The twenty-second is clearly a prophetic psalm: and as it is recorded by Matthew and Mark, that Christ applied this psalm immediately to himself, by quoting the four first words of it in the original, while he hung upon the cross; it may be proper here to give some particular passages, a more critical investigation than I have been able to find they have received.

It appears that those who heard Christ's quotations, were ignorant of the language in which he made them, and, misled by the similarity of the sound of the word Eli, or Eloi, to that of Elias, supposed he called upon that prophet to come to save him; yet their taking a sponge, and dipping it in the vinegar, in which bitter herbs had been infused, putting it on a reed, and reaching it to his mouth, appears to have no connexion with that supposition. But a due attention to the

history, and a proper knowledge of the customs of the people, will shew it had. That those who said and did what is recorded, were not Jews, but Romans, is evident from their not understanding the Hebrew, and that they conceived the words to be an exclamation of agony, may be collected from their supposing he called for Elias to come and deliver him. Now we know that it was the custom, in order to alleviate the pain of the sufferers who were crucified, to put balsam and softening unguents upon soft wool, and apply it to the wounds made by the nails in the hands and feet, and a particularly rich and cordial wine was appointed to be applied in like manner to the lips, and odoriferous gums to the nose.

The drinking this wine which the prophet Amos calls “the wine of the condemned, in the house of their God,” is mentioned as an instance of the unbounded luxury of the Israelites at that time.

Why then, may we ask, did not they apply this balsam and this wine to Christ’s wounds and lips, when they conceived him to be in an agony of pain? And why did they, on the contrary, hold up bitter vinegar to his lips? The answer to these questions will, I conceive, be found in

the sixty-ninth psalm, which ought to be annexed to the twenty-second, as it manifestly belongs to it, leaving out, however, the imprecations in both, as not consistent with the Christian dispensation, though not repugnant to the Mosaic. As this circumstance never happened to any other, it is a proof that the prophecy referred to Christ, and was fulfilled in him in this extraordinary manner ; therefore, when he had tasted the vinegar, he said “ it is finished, this last act completes the prophecy concerning me.” For what purpose a vessel of bitter vinegar was brought to Calvary, we are not told ; John only saying, one was set there ; but as we know that those who assisted at an execution of a criminal, or even attended his trial, were rendered unclean, on which account the chief priests went not in with Pilate to the Judgement hall, because the passover was to be eaten that evening ; we may suppose that the vinegar was brought for the purpose of purifying those Jews who assisted at the crucifixion, and the command given to break the legs of the malefactors, in order to hasten their death, that they might be taken down before the sun set, shews that very extraordinary means were used to prevent the execution from being an obstacle to the celebration of the Pascal Supper, by all who were employed at the crucifixion. While we have the circum-

stances attending Christ's crucifixion, under contemplation, it may not be amiss to observe, that the word translated *prison* in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah and eighth verse, ought to have been rendered *oppression*, as it is in other places of scripture; and if it is so rendered there, the verse will be found to be remarkably descriptive of Christ's trial and condemnation, instead of being, as it now stands, a contradiction to them. For it is a most singular circumstance, in the proceeding against Christ, that he was brought to trial as soon as he was apprehended, although it was in the middle of the night, and carried directly after condemnation to execution, without having ever been put in any prison, contrary to the general usage of giving accused persons some time to prepare for their defence, and after condemnation to prepare for death, as we see had been done by the two malefactors who were crucified with him, who had been some days before condemned, and kept in the prison without the gate leading to Calvary, in which Peter was afterwards confined; and as we find was the case with Barabbas, who was confined, previous to his being brought to trial, in the prison within the city; to which we are told, Peter and John were afterwards carried. The prophet, therefore, by saying he was taken from *oppression* and from judgement, plainly

intimates that his manner of trial should have something peculiarly oppressive, and without the usual indulgence shewn to accused persons, of being suffered to remain in prison, to prepare for their defence or execution.

The twenty-third is a fine description of the care of Providence over the righteous. "The valley of the shadow of death" spoken of in the fourth verse, is mistaken for a declaration of a hope in a resurrection, from not knowing the local circumstance it alludes to. After David built the city of David upon Mount Sion, there was a deep gully between it and Mount Moriah, on which the old town of Jerusalem stood. This ravine or gully was frequently infested with thieves, who laid wait for the passengers, and often murdered them; hence it was called, the valley of the shadow of death. Herod afterwards filled it up, and united the two hills*.

The twenty-fourth psalm is an alternate

* The mention of a rod and staff to defend him in his passage through this valley, gave rise to a curious practice of the Irish Catholics, who place a candle, and rod or staff, in the coffin with their dead, and furnish them with a new pair of brogues, with their soles chalked, to enable them the better to walk through this valley of the shadow of death, which they think they must pass through in their way to purgatory.

service or hymn, sung by the king, and priests, and congregation, upon bringing the ark from the house of Obed Edom, and settling it in the tabernacle on Sion.

The twenty-fifth is a penitential hymn or prayer, composed by David, as well as the fifty-first, upon occasion of Uriah's murder, and after Abfalom had rebelled.

The twenty-sixth, and twenty-seventh, and twenty-eighth, seem all continuations of the former; and the latter part of the twenty-eighth expresses his success against his enemies, which is more particularly celebrated in the following, the twenty-ninth.

The thirtieth was sung at the dedication of the palace he built on Mount Sion.

The thirty-first is expressive of great troubles and deliverance from them, but the particular occasion is not known; probably it was upon account of his escape from Saul out of the city, which in the twenty-first verse he calls a *strong city*.

The thirty-second is called a psalm of instruction, but it is rather a song of thanksgiving to

God, down to the eighth verse, when the address is changed to the auditory, and there ought to be some words inserted to mark the change.

The thirty-third is a psalm of praise and instruction likewise. The three last verses appear to have been sung by a chorus.

The thirty-fourth is said to have been composed by David, as a thanksgiving for his deliverance from Achish, king of Gath, who he apprehended meant to destroy him, notwithstanding David having fled to him for protection from Saul, but pretending to idiotism he was permitted to depart: it is a general psalm and very instructive.

The thirty-fifth is a complaint of his persecutors, and is descriptive of his own particular case.

The thirty-six and thirty-seventh appear to have been composed after his deliverance; and, as they express the difference made by Providence between good and bad men, are of general use.

The thirty-eighth, which is entitled a psalm of remembrance, is connected with the thirty-ninth and fortieth, as far as the fifth verse of the latter,

as they express David's sufferings from disease, calumny, and persecution of his enemies; and in the last to the fifth verse, his thankfulness for his deliverance; but of the sixth verse of the thirty-ninth, which is rendered, "He heapeth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them." It is proper to observe, that the word "riches", is not in the original, and is here improperly inserted, through the translator's ignorance of the practice alluded to, which is the culture of the vine, about the roots of which the earth is heaped up, when the vineyard is dressed in preparation for the vintage. The meaning, therefore, is, That as those who dress the vineyard, cannot tell who may gather the grapes, so is it with those who take the greatest pains to acquire worldly honors or possessions, as they may not live to enjoy them. From the fifth verse to the eleventh of the fortieth is prophetic, and quoted as such by the apostle. The sixth verse requires explanation, as referred to Christ it means, that addressing himself to God he says, "Instead of my offering you the sacrifices required by the law, given to the Israelites, thou hast accepted my devoting myself to thy service, and in token of thy acceptance, of my engagement to do thy will, thou hast *bored my ears*," (which was the mark of perpetual attachment by the law) "and thus qualified me to preach, that thou wilt accept

holiness instead of sacrifice, and that the ritual observances should give place to righteousness."

The forty-first psalm is declaratory of David's case ; and, the forty-second and forty-third, are expressive of his anxiety to return from his banishment, and to the service of the sanctuary. The seven following psalms are not composed by David.

The forty-fourth was written during the captivity.

The forty-fifth is called a Song of Loves, and describes Solomon's inauguration and marriage with Pharoah's daughter. The riding, and being girded with a sword, was then the custom on such occasions. The sixth verse is an apostrophe, and is quoted by the apostle, and probably sung by the priests. The eleventh verse has only the word *Lord* in the Bible translation, which Solomon was to his queen ; but the Common Prayer has added *God*.

The forty-sixth seems to have been composed after returning from a captivity.

The forty-seventh was probably composed by some one, at the time the ark was brought from

Kirjath-jearim, when David composed the twenty-fourth; for upon such an occasion there were probably more than one ode or hymn composed.

The forty-eighth was likewise composed upon some of the Israelites' successes, celebrated by David.

The forty-ninth is a psalm of instruction.

The fiftieth is called a psalm of Asaph. The mighty God, *even the Lord*, should have been, *even Jehovah*. God represented as coming to judge Israel, is not relative to a future judgement, but to a present one: the sacrifices which were ordained had been well observed; and therefore no blame imputed on that account, but they had neglected the main purposes of the law, righteousness, and dutiful obedience.

The fifty-first was composed by David on occasion of Nathan's reproof. The fourth verse is different in the Bible from what it is in the Prayer Book, and not so proper; as *clear* when *thou judgest*, is more fit than *clear* when *thou art judged*: the fifth verse is only an hyberbolical expression of his sense of his wickedness, not referring to original sin, or any wickedness of his parents; the sixth verse is a reflection upon his

attempting to conceal his crime, and flattering himself that all was well, while it was unknown; whereas, God had brought him to a due sense of it, and shewn him, that it was truth in the inward parts, or purity of heart that he required, and not an outward shew. The seventh verse alludes to the law, requiring the leper to be washed with hyssop after his cure, before he was admitted as clean; David beseeches God to wash him in like manner from his pollution, that he may be again received as pure. The eleventh verse implores God not to cast him away from the sanctuary, and not to take from him the spirit of prophecy, with which he had been endowed. The twelfth, which prays to God to uphold him with *his free spirit*, ought to be, to uphold him with *a free or joyful spirit*; and, the thirteenth, gives the reason, “For then,” says he, “shall I have confidence to teach sinners, and they will have encouragement to repent.” In the fourteenth, his blood guiltiness, in the affair of Uriah, appears so heinous, that he entreats more particularly to be forgiven for it, especially, as in the fifteenth he says, “No sacrifices had been appointed to atone for that crime, the law requiring the life of the murderer:” but in the sixteenth he trusts, that a broken and contrite heart is the sacrifice that will be accepted. He throws in the consideration of his beautifying Sion, and

his building walls round it as an argument for obtaining forgiveness.

The fifty-second, by its title, marks the occasion.

The fifty-third is a copy or a repetition of the fourteenth. The title of the fifty-fourth tells the occasion.

The fifty-fifth was written when David was so furrounded by his enemies, (the place of his concealment having been betrayed by those he confided in) that he had no hopes of escaping, unless he had had wings to fly away. *Hell*, in the fifteenth verse, should be the *grave*.

The fifty-sixth is particular, as expressed in the title: the words of the fourth verse, "In God I will praise his word" are repeated in the tenth; and, he means that he will trust in the promise God had made him, of raising him to the throne, according to the anointing of Samuel, chap. xvi. ver. 13.

The fifty-seventh is said to have been composed by David when he fled from Saul, and hid himself in the cave. What he calls his *glory*, was probably a musical instrument.

The fifty-eighth is addressed to the council of state, who appear to have winked at much injustice. There is great difference between the two translations of the seventh and ninth verses of this psalm, that of the Common Prayer is unintelligible.

The fifty-ninth is said to have been composed when Saul sent, and watched the house, to kill David.

The sixtieth was composed after Saul's death, and when David was king both of Judah and Israel, upon occasion of an invasion by the Syrians, Philistines, and Moabites, whom he discomfited, and subdued Moab and Edom.

The sixty-first was composed on occasion of his flight from Absalom and his return. The sixth and seventh verses seem to have been sung by the congregation, and the eighth by David.

The sixty-second is a declaration of confidence in God.

The sixty-third is said to be composed by David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah, where he fled from Saul. The last verse appears

to have been added after David became king, and it was sung in the temple.

The sixty-fourth is a complaint of some enemy, probably Saul.

The sixty-fifth is a psalm of praise, possibly for a plentiful harvest, after a threatened drought. Third verse, *as for our* transgressions, should be, *but our* transgressions. In the sixth verse, the word *which*, is not in the original, and *he* would be better in its place.

The sixty-sixth is a psalm of praise, not said to be of David.

The sixty-seventh is a song or psalm of praise. The word *then*, in the sixth verse, is not in the original, and the verse ought to run ; the earth *hath* yielded her increase.

The sixty-eighth was composed by David when the ark was brought to Mount Sion.

The sixty-ninth is manifestly a continuation of the twenty-second, and applied to Christ.

The seventieth is a psalm of remembrance, and appears to be an addition to the fortieth.

The seventy-first, though not said to have been composed by David, was probably written by him when he fled from Absalom.

The seventy-second, intitled a psalm for Solomon, was not composed by David, but probably by Nathan, when Solomon was declared king. The bounds of his kingdom are described prophetically to be from the Red-sea to the Sea of the Philistines, and from the river Euphrates to the Mediterranean. There are some hyberbolical expressions in it which ought not to be taken literally : a *heap* of corn should be translated, *plenty* of corn, even upon the hills, inso-much, that the noise of the wind through it shall be like that which it makes through the cedars of Libanus.

The seventy-third is a psalm of Asaph.

The seventy-fourth was composed during the the Babylonish captivity.

The seventy-fifth appears to have been composed by David when he expected to be king, declaring the justice with which he should govern. Mr. Bruce has explained the fifth and tenth verses, by informing us, “ That the officers in Abyssinia wore tips of horns fastened to their

foreheads as marks of dignity, and that they were elevated according to the wearer's rank."

The seventy-sixth is a psalm of thanksgiving after Sennacherib's retreat. Verse the fourth, "The hills of the robbers," means, the hills where the enemy carried their prey, than which he says, "The hill of Sion is now more glorious."

The seventy-seventh was composed in the captivity; *my sore run* in the night, ought to be, *I stretched out my hand* in the night without remission.

Seventy-eight is a psalm of instruction, by Asaph, reciting the works of God in favour of the Jews.

The seventy-ninth was written upon Nebuchadnezzar's taking Jerusalem. The sixth and seventh verses are the words of Jeremiah.

The eightieth is a psalm of the same kind, written in the captivity, "The man of thy hand," mentioned in verse seventeen, is supposed to be Cyrus.

The eighty-first was composed for the great festival of the New-moon, which happened in

the seventh month. It is not known what was the occasion of that feast. In the sixth verse, the words (*says God*) should be inserted.

The eighty-second is a psalm of Asaph, and of instruction to the judges, who are called gods or elohims, verse first.

The eighty-third is a song of Asaph, when many enemies were in league against the Jews.

The eighty-fourth, though not said to have been by David, was probably composed by him when he fled from Absalom.

The eighty-fifth was written by some pious person after the return from the Babylonish captivity.

The eighty-sixth is intitled a prayer of David. "I am *holy*," verse the second, should be, I am *beneficent*. "The dangers of *hell*," verse thirteen, should be, the dangers of *death*.

The eighty-seventh is in praise of Jerusalem after Moriah was added to Sion by Solomon; but the whole is very obscure.

The eighty-eighth is an alternate song of

Heman, nephew to Samuel, and David's feir; what was his case is not known.

The eighty-ninth relates to the destruction of Jerufalem by the Babylonians, composed by one Ethan during the captivity. "In vision to the holy one," ver. 19, means, The prophet Samuel. Ver. 27, the phraise, *first born*, has the same meaning here, as *begotten* in the second psalm. Israel is called the *first born* (Exod. chap. iv. ver. 22.) or the most exalted or favoured.

The ninetieth is ascribed to Moses, and supposed to be composed in the wilderness.

The ninety-first, the author not known, composed in a time of pestilence. Ver. 14, the words (says God) ought to be inserted.

The ninety-second is intitled, a psalm for the sabbath day, on which psalms of praise only were used. The author is not known.

The ninety-third is similar to it.

The ninety-fourth seems to have been composed in a time of great corruption.

The ninety-fifth is a psalm of praise for the

sabbath, or the feast of tabernacles. The words (says God) should be inserted, verse eight.

The ninety-sixth is a psalm of praise, and may fitly be applied to the advent of Christ.

The ninety-seventh is to the same purpose; and the ninety-eighth also refers to Christ.

The ninety-ninth respects Jerusalem.

The hundredth is called a psalm of praise, or thanksgiving, sung when the sacrifices of thanksgiving were offered.

The hundred and first is peculiar to David, expressive of his purpose to govern justly.

The hundred and second is called a prayer of the afflicted, composed by some one during the Babylonish captivity.

The hundred and third is a psalm of David; a most excellent thanksgiving hymn.

The hundred and fourth appears to be an extension of the nineteenth, but by whom composed is not known. The eighth verse ought to be, *the mountains ascended, and the valleys went down*

into the places appointed for them. Instead of *let*, in the last verse, it should be, *they shall*.

The hundred and fifth, hundred and sixth, and hundred and seventh, are historical, and the first of these seems to have been composed before the captivity; the second during the captivity; and the last after it.

The hundred and eighth and hundred and ninth, are nearly the same as the fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth.

The hundred and tenth is a prophecy of Christ; but the word *rod* should be *sceptre*, ver. 2. And *shall smite the heads over divers countries*, ought to be, *shall wound the head which is over many countries*, ver. 6. “Drink of the brook in the way,” is an allusion to the brave warriors under Joshua, lapping, or taking up the water in their hands.

The hundred and eleventh is a psalm of praise, entitled Hallelujah; as is the hundred and twelfth also. Ver. 8, ought to be, he shall not be afraid whilst he looketh upon his enemies.

The hundred and thirteenth, hundred and fourteenth, hundred and fifteenth, hundred and

sixteenth, hundred and seventeenth, and hundred and eighteenth, are all entitled Hallelujahs, or songs of praise. In the hundred and sixteenth, “The pains of *hell*,” ought to be, pains of *death* or the *grave*; and the *cup of salvation*, ought to be, the *cup of thankfulness*; then the sense will run thus: I will call my friends together, and before I drink, utter a thanksgiving to God, and then give it to them to drink, and give praise also; the custom at peace offerings. The latter part of the eighteenth verse refers to Christ, and these six psalms, taken together, form a compact work of praise for mercies.

The hundred and nineteenth is a psalm of instruction for youth, divided into as many parts as there are letters in the alphabet, and each verse in each part beginning with its appropriate letter, a device to assist the memory of the pupils who were to get it by heart; they were to repeat a part on each step, as they ascended the temple stairs.

The hundred and twentieth appears to have been composed by David, when the calumnies of Doeg forced him to fly among the Arabians, whose society he disliked. Tents of Kedar are the tents of the Arabs, a people that delighted in war and plunder.

The author of the hundred and twenty-first is not known, but it is a general thanksgiving.

The hundred and twenty-second was composed by David after he had finished the wall round the city, and the people desired to go up with him to worship in the temple upon that occasion.

The hundred and twenty-third was probably composed by some pious person, at the time Sennacherib came against Jerufalem; and the hundred and twenty fourth and hundred and twenty fifth seem to have been composed as psalms of thanksgiving after that deliverance.

The hundred and twenty-sixth was composed by Ezra after the return from the Babylonish captivity.

The hundred and twenty-seventh should be a psalm *of* Solomon, not *for* Solomon, upon his maxim, that nothing can prosper without God be with us.

The hundred and twenty-eighth is a kind of epithalamium sung at marriages.

The hundred and twenty-ninth is an imprecation against the Babylonians.

The hundred and thirtieth appears to have been composed during the captivity; *feared*, in verse the fourth, ought to be *reverenced*.

The hundred and thirty-first, a song of humility, especially on religious accounts.

The hundred and thirty-second was composed upon the removal of the ark into the temple by Solomon.

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The hundred and thirty-~~third~~^{fourth} is the evening hymn sung by the Levites at shutting up the temple gates. The third verse is the answer from the watch.

The hundred and thirty-~~fourth~~^{fifth} is the morning hymn at opening the gates. The last verse should be, *Ye who dwell at Jerusalem*.

The hundred and thirty-sixth is a psalm of commemoration, sung by the priests and Levites, with a chorus.

The hundred and thirty-seventh was composed during the Babylonish captivity.

The hundred and thirty-eighth is a thanksgiving. Great men are called gods, or Elohim.

The hundred and thirty-ninth is a psalm of praise. Verse fifteenth, *beneath* in the earth, means the womb, which is so called, as well as the grave.

The hundred and fortieth is an imprecation.

The hundred and forty-first, is instructive as far as the three first verses ; the remainder unintelligible.

The hundred and forty-second is a prayer of David when he lay hid in the cave.

The hundred and forty-third is similar to it. The tenth verse, *land of righteousness*, should be, *plain country*.

The hundred and forty-fourth is a psalm of David, composed after a deliverance, but during his persecution.

The hundred and forty fifth, a psalm of praise, composed by David.

The hundred and forty-sixth, is a similar psalm.

The hundred and forty-seventh was composed after the return from the captivity.

The hundred and forty-eighth is a psalm of general thanksgiving ; the author not known.

The hundred and forty-ninth is a hymn after victory.

The hundred and fiftieth is a general psalm of praise.

There are parts or portions, in most of the psalms that are particular, and not fit for general use ; which, if they were selected, might be adapted to public worship. This has been lately done, with Tate and Brady's version of the singing psalms, and the selection is bound up with the Common Prayer Books, distributed by the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge. If the reading psalms were, in like manner, selected, that part of our church service would be greatly improved, as I shall have occasion to shew, when I come to observe upon our Liturgy.

APPENDIX, N^o. II.

HISTORICAL
AND
CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS
UPON THE
EUCCHARIST.

So much has already been written upon the Eucharist, and by such eminent divines, that it may appear presumption in a layman to attempt a fresh investigation of the subject; but, when it is considered that all ecclesiastics have attachments to some system, and do not feel themselves at liberty to discuss points of doctrine which affect its tenets with perfect freedom; it ought not to be deemed arrogance in one who has no terms to keep with any system but his Bible, to endeavour to throw new light upon a point allowed to be of the highest importance, by placing it in a wider and more open field.

Waterland has furnished us with the several names which have been given to this rite in dif-

ferent ages, and the reason of them, which marks the progress of the superstition with which it has been observed. St. Luke designs it simply, by the *breaking of bread*; but St. Paul having said, “that the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? &c.” it got the name of *communion*. As love feasts were kept the nights before the celebration of the Eucharist, in imitation of Christ’s last supper, before his crucifixion; at which oblations and offerings were made to the priests of bread and wine, and other victuals and necessaries; what bread and wine was wanted for the following Eucharist, was taken from those offerings, and hence it got the name of *sacrifice, or offering*. In Pliny’s Letter to Trajan, he describes this custom of the first Christians, and marks the exact distinction between the love feasts and the Eucharist, which most Christian churches have since confounded. “The Christians,” says he, “used, upon a particular stated day, to assemble before it was light, and all joined in a hymn to Christ, as a God; and they bound themselves by an oath, not for a sanction to any vice, but, on the contrary, to preserve themselves guiltless of all robbery and adultery: likewise, that they would never break their word, nor refuse, when called upon, to return any pledge which had been intrusted to their hands, (this was the love feast.) When this was

completed they used to retire, and some time afterwards to come again, and take bread, which they received (men and women) promiscuously, and in the most innocent manner ; this last was the Eucharist, and it hence got the name of Sacrament, though most improperly, because it was at the love feast, which preceded it, that the oath was taken. It soon after was called Eucharist, as an act of thanksgiving or blessing*, and a memorial of our Lord's body. It was afterwards called Passover, to give it a nearer relation to the real body ; and, lastly, *Mass*, from *Missa*, sending out ; because, when churches assumed the power of damning and forgiving, they turned out of the church all such as they did not deem worthy to communicate."

The account given of the institution by Waterland, throws Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul, into one ; thus,

"The night in which the Lord Jesus was betrayed, as they were eating, or did eat, Jesus took bread, and giving thanks, blessed *it*, and brake it, and gave it unto his disciples, and said, take, eat, this *is* my body, which is given and broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

* See note upon this expression, in page 119.

After supper, likewise, having taken the cup and given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, drink ye all of this. For this cup is my blood of the new covenant; the covenant in my blood which is shed for you, for many, for the remission of sins: this do as oft as ye drink it in remembrance of me, (and they all drank of it.) Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father, in the kingdom of God; and when they had sung an hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives."

Upon this statement I shall proceed to observe, "that as remembrance (as Tillotson says) is the actual thought of what we *habitually* know (fifty-fourth sermon): remembrance of me proves the absence of the person to be remembered." But Waterland cautions his disciples against pressing the catholics with this argument, lest it should be urged against the church of England's doctrine of a spiritual presence, and spiritual eating; and he labours most industriously, (but most ineffectually) to shew that remembrance may be applied to things present, as well as absent; for he says, "to remember may mean to keep in mind something present; as, remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth; remember to keep holy the sabbath day." But

these do not apply, to prove the *presence* of Christ, either corporally or spiritually; for, "remember" is in both cases applied to something passing or transitory. "Remember to keep holy the sabbath day." The keeping it holy, *when it occurs*, is the thing to be remembered; and, "the days of thy youth" is the *time* to which the remembrance is to be applied, and not to the Creator. The spiritual presence, as well as the carnal presence of Christ's body and blood are equally excluded by the words "remembrance of me;" and it is full as unintelligible to suppose we spiritually eat and drink the carnal substance of his body and blood, when we eat and drink bread and wine, as it is to suppose we carnally eat flesh and drink blood, when we are eating bread and drinking wine. Christ neither said, he would be carnally or spiritually eaten or drank by all communicants. The Church of England, and the Church of Rome differ in this. The doctrine of the Church of England is blameable, but it is corrected in practice. The practice of the Romish church is more faulty than its doctrine. The Romish church says, "Christ's body and blood are present in the bread and wine, after an invisible manner only, without changing the nature of the the elements." In her practice, however, the bread and wine, after consecration, are in their

substance adored as the *very* body and blood of Christ. The Church of England says, “ although the bread and wine is still but bread and wine after consecration, yet those who worthily receive it, do spiritually eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, and prays that the communicants may *so eat* the flesh and *so drink* the blood of Christ, that their *mortal bodies* may be made clean by *his body*.” But no sensible protestant imagines, by eating and drinking the bread and wine after consecration, that he either eats or drinks the flesh and blood of Christ in any manner whatever, but that the benefit he receives from communicating, is in consequence of his performing a bounden duty and service in the best manner he is able; and it seems perfectly unaccountable, that any spiritual effect should be expected to be produced by eating or drinking after Christ’s declaration to his disciples, “ That nothing which goeth into a man can defile him;” for it is plainly to be inferred, by parity of reason, that nothing which goeth into the man can purify him; and that, as what we eat or drink will not frustrate our salvation, so will not our salvation be furthered by whatever kind of food we take for the sustenance of our bodies*.

* If I were asked to describe the difference between believing we *carnally* eat flesh and drink blood; and, believing that we

Taking, however, Waterland's statement which I have quoted, as containing the substance of the institution, the object of a Christian's enquiry must be, What is the duty arising out of it? To discover which, he must first examine, What it is that Christ commanded to be done, when he said, 'Do this in remembrance of me; and do this as oft as ye shall drink it in remembrance of me.' The **THIS**, which Christ then did, and which he commanded to be done, we find was to take bread, as the disciples were eating, or did eat, 'and giving thanks, blessed it, and brake it, and gave it unto them, and said, take, eat, this my body which is given and broken for you, do this in remembrance of me.' After supper, likewise, having taken the cup and given thanks*, he gave it to them saying, 'drink ye all of this, or divide it among yourselves, (contrary to the usual custom of every one drinking out of his own cup)

spiritually eat flesh and drink blood, when our senses assure us in both cases, that we are only eating bread and drinking wine, I would answer, that our belief in the one case is an absurdity, and in the other is nonsense.

* The reason why Christ did not bless the wine as well as the bread, may be inferred from the circumstance of the cup which he then took and gave to his disciples, being the cup of *Blessing* or thanksgiving, as that which was drank after a meal was always called.

for this cup is my blood of the new covenant ; the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you, for many for the remission of sins. *This* do as oft as you drink, in remembrance of me.' The *THIS* then which we are commanded to do, is literally for him who administers, to take bread, and to give thanks, and to bless and brake it, and divide it among the disciples who are to eat it in remembrance of Christ, and to take the cup, and having given thanks, to give it to them to divide among themselves, and to drink the wine in remembrance of Christ ; and this simple transaction appears to have been the practice of the apostles, and of their immediate disciples ; and St. Paul's reprehension of the Corinthians, for acting in a different manner, fully proves the general custom. "Instead," says he "of you all, in common partaking of the same bread and of the same wine, as being all one society of Christians or followers of Christ, and equally sharers in the benefits of his sufferings and death, which you meet to commemorate, and ought, therefore, at the same time to testify your communion and fellowship with each other. Those who are able, bring their own bread and wine ; also their suppers, as if they came to a common meal, which they eat and drink by themselves, without participating with their poorer brethren, in direct con-

tradition to Christ's command, and in manifest disobedience of his most emphatic precept of "loving one another, as he had loved you," and this at the time, and in the very act of pretending to remember him; but this surely is not the way to shew you have a grateful remembrance of him, or that, in what you do, you have in contemplation his body broken, and his blood shed upon the cross for the common redemption of you and all mankind."

But let us more minutely consider the words of Christ and of St. Paul, and ask ourselves whether there is in them a sufficient authority for us to believe, that when Christ gave the bread to his disciples, and said, "take, eat, this my body," that they actually did eat his flesh and drink his blood at the time? And if we can believe they did, as this was done thirty-six hours before his crucifixion, we should ask again, whether it was the *same body* which they had eaten, which was afterwards crucified, or was it another? But let us see how the apostles appear to have understood the words of Christ? Can we suppose, they conceived they were actually eating his flesh and drinking his blood, when they were eating the bread and drinking the wine? If they did, they must have had very little regard for their master to use

him so cruelly, and pretty strong stomachs themselves to eat and drink what they conceived to be human flesh and blood! One would think too, that they would have expressed some abhorrence at the thing, but not a word is said by any of them to that purpose; and, though it was but a little before, that Peter expressed his repugnance to suffer Christ to wash his feet, yet it seems he could eat his flesh and drink his blood without compunction. We might expect likewise, that after they all had made a repast in the Abyssinian manner upon their master, they would have thought it strange, and expressed some surprise, to see him get up and walk out before them to the Mount of Olives, as if no such thing had happened. But, perhaps, it will be said, they each of them swallowed him whole, and cast him up again, one after the other, sandals and all. Yet this supposition has its difficulties too, for as Judas was the last that swallowed him, and went out as soon as he had got him down, he might be supposed to have carried him off, unless we again suppose Satan, who entered Judas at the same time, not liking his company, forced him back again. Now all this absurdity arises out of the taking Christ's words literally; but it is very clear the apostles did not, at the time, or afterwards, so understand them. We read of their breaking bread from house to house; and Paul's taking bread

and giving thanks, by which we know is meant the celebration of the Eucharist ; but not a word is said of their eating and drinking the flesh and blood of Christ, or that the bread was transmuted into the body of Christ, or the wine into his blood. But even if we could believe that the apostles did actually eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ *at the time* when this rite was instituted, there is nothing said by Christ, to make us suppose that when Christians were in future times to eat bread and drink wine in memory of him, as he then commanded them to do, that they should also, always eat his flesh and drink his blood ; for if he had so intended, instead of saying, “ Do this in *remembrance of me*,” he would have said, “ Do this *to me*”. As you are now going to eat my flesh and drink my blood, so shall all my followers do ; for I shall always be present when you or they chuse to call for bread and wine to eat and drink in memory of me ; and I will give you and them for ever, as I do now, my flesh to eat and my blood to drink.

As, however, it is St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians that is most relied on, it may be proper to observe, that until that Epistle was generally known by all Christians, they must have all been in damnable error, by not discovering that they were eating Christ's flesh when they were breaking bread,

and drinking his blood when they were drinking wine, in commemoration of his last supper with his apostles; and how did it happen, may we ask, that the very church which Paul himself had planted some years before, were so ignorant of the truth as to run into such disorders as that Epistle reprehends? and as that Epistle was sent to the Corinthians only, why, may we ask, were the rest of the Christians, both at Rome and in Palestine, suffered to remain in the same ignorance until that Epistle should, some how or other, get among them: and is it not strange that all the other apostles should be so unconcerned at this fatal conditon of the brethren, with whom they were daily communicating, that not one of them took the pains to set them right, which they were more especially bound to do, as they had all, as it must be supposed, actually eaten the flesh and drank the blood of Christ from his own hand, whereas, Paul was not then among them, and only knew what had passed by inspiration? yet it seems all Christians, and the Corinthians as well as the rest, notwithstanding this Epistle, went on breaking bread and drinking wine, (though in a more decent manner, it is hoped) in commemoration of Christ's last supper and subsequent death, for near three hundred years after that Epistle was written, without ever discovering that they were eating his flesh and drinking his blood.

If, however, notwithstanding all that has been said, it is still contended that we must interpret Christ's and his apostles declarations *literally*, in the case we have been considering, it must, surely, be granted that we are equally bound to do so in all other instances; and if we do we shall soon perceive the absurdities into which such a mode of interpretation will lead us. Christ expressly says, at one time, that "he is the vine, and his disciples the branches." At another, he says, "He is the bread which came down from heaven." Upon another occasion he calls himself "the shepherd;" and again he says, "He is the door into the sheep-fold." Now are we to believe him to have been a vine at one time, to have been bread at another, to have been a shepherd also, and to have been a door? and yet, in all these instances Christ speaks as positively as he does when he says of the bread which he held in his hand, *this is my body*, or as it ought to be, *this my body*, for the original has not the word *is*. And as St. Paul is more peremptory in his assertion, that *we are buried with Christ* by baptism; than that when we eat the Eucharistical bread, we eat the body of Christ, and when we drink the wine, that we drink his blood, are we not equally bound to believe, that every child that is baptised is actually laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea?

It is curious to observe the shifts to which the contenders for the literal interpretation of Christ's or St. Paul's expressions are driven, in order to avoid the consequences they lead to. When they are asked, Whether any part of the Eucharist be evacuated as our other food, and whether it is the same flesh which was born of the Virgin that is eaten in the Eucharist? some have answered, "That though it is the *same*, it ought to be considered as *different*, because it is in a different state. That when it is consecrated it goes into the belly, and so into the draught, as to the *matter* it consists of, but not as to what it is made by prayer." Others have asserted, "That the bread and wine, after having been transferred into the body and blood of Christ, and so eaten and drank afterwards, recover their former state in the stomach; and, that Christ's body and blood evaporates through the pores, or enters the blood, or continues in the man until his burial. And still further expedients were sought to get rid of the difficulties in which these expositions involved the doctrine, when a rat was supposed to have eaten the consecrated bread, or when it was administered to a wicked person. The body of Christ, in those cases, was said to lie snug in some corner of the rat, or of the wicked person, until they died, and then to make its escape to heaven,

Common sense revolts at the recital of these absurdities, and we are well pleased to get rid of them by the reflection, that as the Creator knows we can receive no possible evidence of his revelations, but through our senses, and by the exercise of our reason, he can never be supposed to intend to try our faith by a flat contradiction to both. Christ's miracles were all appeals to the senses, in proof of his divine mission. Had the blind man *appeared* to continue without the use of sight: had the lame man *appeared* to continue a cripple after Christ desired the one "to take up his bed and walk," and the other to receive his sight, would the multitude, or even his disciples, have believed he had performed their cure, or allowed him to have wrought a miracle upon either of them? Why then is it to be supposed the Creator should expect Christians of these times to believe, that bread and wine are converted into flesh and blood by the consecration of a priest, when our senses convince us there is no change or alteration in them? Would not that be to suppose our Creator expected us to give more credit to a simple priest for a miraculous power, than Christ expected to be given to himself? But to return to the history.

As the passover was not to be eaten till Friday, and Christ's supper was on Thursday even, when the preparation for the passover on Friday was to

begin with the Jewish day on Thursday even. Hence it is that the disciples ask him on Thursday even, that is on the beginning of the Jewish Friday, "where wilt thou that we make ready?" meaning, where get the lamb to carry to the Temple, to be killed, and brought back, and dressed? Christ therefore institutes his passover with bread and wine on the beginning of Friday, as he could not do it on the even, he being himself to suffer that day; when, instead of a lamb, his body was to be killed. He tells them, therefore, on Thursday even, (that is on the beginning of Friday) he should not be with them to eat the passover at even, for he assures them, he should never again taste wine upon earth, which was telling them, he should not be with them at the paschal supper, as wine was always drank at the eating the paschal lamb. Four cups of wine were taken, and all blessed by the master, and distributed upon the occasion; and were each, therefore, called a cup of blessing. Christ appears to have taken but one cup on Thursday even, the ordinary cup of blessing after supper; which shews it not to have been the paschal feast, but an ordinary supper; and that he instituted his new passover after it, and in room of that which was to be celebrated the next even; and the first Christians, who were Jewish converts, continued to celebrate the passover after the Eucharist.

If Christ had celebrated the pascal supper, he would have told his disciples, that what they were now celebrating they were no more to celebrate, but to do what he was now going to do instead of it. Whereas, when he took the bread and wine, he simply tells them, they were to eat bread and drink wine, in future, in remembrance of him, for that his body was given, and his blood would be shed to deliver them from the bondage of sin and death. If he had not been crucified till the day after the pascal supper, he could not have been the lamb of God, which St. John declared him to be, in allusion to his being put to death instead of a lamb on the day of the passover, and his blood accepted by God on account of all mankind, as that of the pascal lamb was, on behalf of each Israelitish family, who, in obedience to the command, and in confidence of the promise of preservation made to them, sprinkled it upon the side posts of their doors, to preserve them from the temporal destroying angel; as Christ's blood does all those who confide in its efficacy, and apply it as he has directed them to do, from the power of their spiritual destroyer the devil. Here then is no mystery, but a plain inference from the due observance of a plain command, to which all Christians are bound to pay obedience. It is, however, well known, that the dread of

eating and drinking, or as the priests call it, *receiving* the bread and wine *unworthily* is the occasion that many well disposed Christians abstain from the celebration of this rite, understanding the *worthiness* required by St. Paul, as having respect to the inward purity of the mind, and the clearness of the conscience from the recollection of any sin ; but it is evident from the context, that the worthiness St. Paul speaks of, relates to the manner of performing the rite, and has no respect to the state of the conscience. We say an action is worthily performed when it is done with propriety, and a decorum suitable to the occasion, and to the character of the person to whom it is done ; the reprehension of the apostle, therefore, goes only to the *manner* in which the Corinthians performed the rite, some making it a common meal, others eating the bread and wine they brought with them among themselves, and not dividing it with their poor brethren ; others drinking so much wine as to intoxicate themselves, while others were without any. “ Some,” says he, “ are hungry, and others are drunken,” but not a word does he say of their improperly suffering sinners to partake of it with them, or of their allowing any to come and sit down who had not been previously examined and absolved by the priest ; for he tells them *to examine themselves*, that is, to

reflect seriously upon the nature of the rite they were about to perform, and to judge themselves, whether they were sufficiently informed of its end and purpose, and whether they were in a suitable disposition to perform it with due solemnity and propriety. Let those then, who by fraud or artifice have converted a commemorative testimony of love and gratitude to a divine benefactor, and of benevolence and brotherly affection to each other, into an engine of priestly power, and controul over the consciences of their flock, thereby deterring ignorant and weak, but well meaning Christians from performing it; look to the rendering a severe account to him who gave commandment to all his followers, to “do this in remembrance of me.”

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reflected seriously upon the nature of the life they were about to perform, and to judge themselves whether they were sufficiently informed of its end and purpose, and whether they were in a suitable disposition to perform it with due solemnity and propriety. Let those then, who by hand or artifice have converted a commemorative festival of love and gratitude to a divine benefactor, and of benevolence and brotherly affection to each other, into an engine of priestly power, and control over the consciences of their flock, thereby deterring ignorant and weak, but well meaning Christians from performing it; look to the rendering a severe account to him who gave commandment to all his followers, to "do this in remembrance of me."

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Considerations On The Universality And Uniformity Of The Theocracy

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